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## **Assisting Hispanoamericano parents to recognize children's literacy requirements by recontextualizing the academic language of social studies**

Martín Christopher Ruiz

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ASSISTING HISPANOAMERICANO PARENTS  
TO RECOGNIZE CHILDRENS LITERACY REQUIREMENTS  
BY RECONTEXTUALIZING THE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE  
OF SOCIAL STUDIES

---

A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
English as a Second Language

---

by  
Martín Christopher Ruiz  
June 1993



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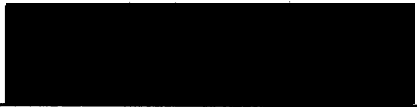
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by  
Martín Christopher Ruiz

June 1993

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## ABSTRACT

What goes on inside the classroom is often a mysterious world to which many Hispanoamericano parents do not have access. Often these parents lack a formal education or have limited experiences with schooling in another country. As a consequence, these parents are not able to fully support the English language instruction of their children.

Due to the distinct cultural biases that operate in the educational system, many teachers tend to blame these parents for not valuing education nor caring about their childrens future. These parents, on the other hand, many of whom can be seen day in and day out faithfully dropping off and picking up their children at the school, often put their trust in the school system to handle the formal "enseñanza" (teaching) of literacy and academic content for their children while letting their home environments be the context for "educación" in social and moral values.

Unfortunately, under these circumstances, the children are put at high risk of academic failure since neither the teachers nor the parents apparently understand the perspective from which the other group is operating.

This project has combined a literature review of pertinent findings, along with a pedagogical model that takes into account the societal, school, and home environments as the larger contexts within which a selected group of second grade parents and their children

were brought together in the classroom by me, the teacher, so that the parents could not only witness, but participate in a series of Social Studies lessons that their children were expected to master. The themes that were covered held a high interest for adults since they were correlated with adult survival English skills and knowledge, including historical, ethical, cultural, geographic, economic, and sociopolitical literacies relating to life in the United States.

This exposure of parents to their childrens world of "aprendizaje" (formal learning) and of children to their parents knowledge of the subject matter was mediated by me, the teacher. During the lessons, meaning was negotiated from utterances, readings, and writing in Spanish. Then the process was mediated further by another presentation of the same content in English. Thus, the parents were assisted in recognizing their childrens literacy requirements in both languages by way of studying the concepts that were taught in these Social Studies lessons.

Based on the level of positive response on the part of the families involved in this project, it is apparent that Hispanoamericano parents are willing and able to involve themselves with their childrens education. In this study, this took the form of attending classes that taught parents what their children are required to learn and how they as parents can contribute to this process to better ensure successful academic outcomes for "los jovenes" (the young ones). The simple fact of coming to the school,

listening to lessons that their children are expected to learn, and studying alongside their children to accomplish this goal, was a first step for many of these families, in terms of their orientation toward the educational system in this country. To have participated in a class of this nature, however, was certainly a big step as well.

A major implication of this study is the need for parental involvement in schools. The establishment of an ongoing network of parents as a module for helping groups of children, perhaps as grade level tutors, could become an effective way for implementing such involvement. Of course, any such project would be best served by a long term longitudinal study that could accompany the short term cross sectional component.

Beyond the parents taking such an initiative, it would be most beneficial for a District-wide support of such a program that would involve making accessible to parents the materials and resources that would be most appropriate for enabling themselves to succeed in such an endeavor, as well as exploring ways to offer more multicultural approaches to the education of language minority families.

Older siblings and cross age models as well as leaders in the Hispanoamericano community within and outside of education could be called upon to act as mentors and sponsors for specific families that showed promise of pursuing learning through high school and beyond.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before and during this project I listened to a heterogeneity of voices that helped me to focus on the final form that would best serve its original intention, that is, to assist Hispanoamericano families to help their children to do better in school.

I wish to express my gratitude for the insightful support that was given to me in this undertaking by Dr. Lynne Díaz-Rico, my advisor, Mrs. Luz Jiménez, my aide, Mr. Richard Alaniz, our school psychologist, Mrs. Mary Naylor, our school district's special education coordinator, Mrs. Lilian Jezik, our bilingual resource teacher, Mr. Wayne George, migrant education teacher, Mrs. Linda White, our site mentor teacher, Mr. George Wilcox, my principal, Dr. Estéban Díaz, my first reader, and Dr. José Hernández, my second reader. Of course, I am also indebted to the parents who originally inspired the idea for this project, and their children who brought it into actuality.

The multivoicedness of meaning that all of them contributed to me was reflected throughout the planning, design, and implementation of the module described in this project.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is based on the idea of bringing language minority parents, specifically Hispanoamericano<sup>1</sup> parents into their childrens classroom in order to experience for themselves what their children face day in and day out during their regimen of formalized learning. This project describes how parents, their children and I worked together to create a mediating context for language and cognitive development.

This was accomplished by having the parents go through actual lessons that their children do. The components of these lessons included primary language instruction involving oral academic discourse, as well as the manipulation of text for meaning through readings in the Social Studies textbook. Written practice to probe for understanding on the material was the last area of exposure to this part of the school curriculum. Second language instruction on the same content then followed along the same language proficiencies of aural, oral, reading, and written formalized discourse on themes that revolved around family and societal issues within and outside of this country.

<sup>1</sup>"Hispanoamericano" denotes persons who are native speakers of Spanish, born in the Americas, and living, with or without legal status, in the United States. Thus, the term includes individuals of Mexican-American, Mexican, Central American, South American, and Caribbean heritage. I have used this term rather than the more generic word "Hispanic" and the generalized term "Latino," both of which refer to Spanish speaking people, or those whose heritage is such. In like fashion, "Chicano" and "Mexican-American" were not used since Spanish as a first language is not necessarily a feature associated with this population. The focus group for this study was the majority of more recent Mexican and Central American immigrants to this country, who due to language, cultural, and legal issues, are at high risk in regard to their childrens education. An all encompassing term for all of the above mentioned groups with a common heritage, and different ethnic expressions, of course would be "La raza."



The aim of this parental outreach was to go beyond the measures that have been followed in previous interventions, that will be reviewed, so that parents might become more directly involved in a dynamic way in the furtherance of family literacy in both the primary language of the home and the second language encountered in the school and in this society at large.

The particular academic area that was selected for framing this involvement was Social Studies, in which the decontextualized language of the school was recontextualized in a bilingual fashion for Hispanoamericano families by means of a mediated effort on the part of myself, a group of parents, and their children.

There is an extensive literature that argues that a language and cultural gap exists between the homes of Hispanoamericano children and their school environment. This gap is said to account for the poor academic achievement of these students.

This problem of language gap between the home and the school is exacerbated by the lack of English basic interpersonal communication skills or survival English, on the part of many of language minority parents. To further complicate the issue, a good number of these parents are nonliterate or semi-literate in their primary language, Spanish.

There is a pressing need to bridge the barriers between academic decontextualized learning with its formal registers of speech and writing and the everyday contextualized world of experience with its accompanying informal registers of speech and

written communication that is brought to the classroom by children as well as adult learners.

Mediating between these two different contexts of language usage to create an overlap and an interplay for negotiating meaning in a collaborative effort on the part of parents and their children is a role that the teacher can take to facilitate learning.

The creation of such a mediating context is not contingent upon merely being a bilingual teacher. Nor is it a matter of being aware of certain cultural aspects of language minority students. Teachers must create ambiance, "un ambiente," that genuinely fosters an appreciation of the child's language and culture and uses them to create a powerful and effective learning environment.

The first step in this process is for teachers to integrate their thinking, to open their minds to the opportunities for mutual enrichment, not seeing the cultural background of the learners as an impairment to their methods or styles. This is fundamental to any kind of hope for conveying a sense of empowerment to students.

What is required is a contextually conscious curriculum that undergirds children by maintaining their own cultural heritage as a strong base from which to flourish. How the teacher organizes the class is a cultural decision. There are implicit attitudes that underlie and determine educational outcomes. These need to be brought out into the open, examined, and altered to suit the circumstances of the particular cultural context of students. Merely conforming to the usual way of doing things has led to mediocrity at best, with a failure

to learn being the most predictable result for the students, under such conditions.

In recognizing each and every student as a person who brings their own knowledge to the class, the teacher can begin to allow for active participation rather than settling for passive spectating. This strategy that includes rather than excludes children is possible when the teacher is not only bilingual, but cross-cultural, in terms of knowing how not just how to teach the curriculum, but how to reach the learners, with a certain "confianza" or trust that is communicated. This encompasses the way of expressing oneself that comes from a familiarity with specific cultural outlooks in students from an Hispanoamericano background, manifest in the tone of one's voice, and the way that one holds oneself, "su manera de ser," or way of being with them.

In this fashion one can truly bring things home for Spanish dominant students in a meaningful way. The idea is not to simply accomodate these students as an inevitable inconvenience or impediment, but to involve them as a pressing priority. Not to have them just "sobrevivir" or survive, but "superarse," succeed. Half measures will only show marginal and non-lasting benefits for minority language learners, struggling to learn in a strange language while being expected to absorb new concepts. A radical intervention is critical, therefore, at the primary level, when young children are on the threshold of beginning to actually operate with abstract concepts, yet they are faced with attempting to do this in a

language that they do not understand.

The role of the teacher as a mediator is crucial under these conditions. An analogy can be drawn with the role of a salesperson, with the students and their families being the clients. Of course, every good salesperson must study and know their product or service; however, if they fail to understand the territory, and cannot relate to the customers on their own terms by establishing a proper rapport, then no one will buy what is being offered for sale.

What is being peddled here is the value of formal education. Given the well known drop out rate among Hispanoamericanos and the nature of compulsory and so-called compensatory education, the "no sale" ("it does not work out well," when read in Spanish) sign is what comes up on the cash register of values among many of these families.

In order for their students and themselves to achieve successful outcomes it becomes evident then that teachers need to invest their time to get to know the territory, that is, the cultural context from which their students are coming, in order to be able to convince them that what they are "selling," namely, knowledge and learning strategies are worthwhile products for them as consumers. If the message doesn't get across, then the students are not going to invest the time nor make the purchase, and will not have faith in the "company," that is, the educational system, eventually dropping out of school as soon as possible.

Going beyond the above analogy, and within the greater circle

of our society and culture where the teaching profession operates, the problem of a "hidden curriculum" (Hernandez, 1989) can be seen even more clearly. It is well known that most bilingual programs are basically geared towards transitioning the second language learners as soon as they are able to "function" or seemingly survive in English on an oral basis. Moving students through the system while taking pride in their second language "acquisition" (Krashen, 1988) as shown by their ability to converse in English, while abandoning their first language is a common phenomenon. Yet, when these same students are not performing academically, there is puzzlement on the part of many within and outside of education. Either through misguided or intentional efforts, what is occurring is the antithesis of empowerment.

In this heterogeneous society, it is imperative to be sensitive in the area of multicultural education, to see different cultures and languages as resources, and to interact with students based upon their experiences and needs. This project attempts to address this need by calling upon parents to model values not only at home, but in the context of the formal learning environment of school as a means of recontextualizing for themselves the knowledge that they otherwise may not have access to, and therefore feel ambivalent or antipathetic towards.

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Given that the school is an extension of the mass society, acting as its arm in implementing the adopted curriculum and inculcating the values peculiar to the mainstream culture, then, in fact, both Hispanoamericano children and their parents are faced with a sociolinguistic dilemma. These children, more often than not, have no one to turn to at home when they need answers to questions relating to schoolwork. Yet they are expected to perform in the same manner as other children who have the advantage of coming from homes where the primary language is also that which is promulgated in the school system. Even when language minority children are placed in bilingual programs, often their parents may be non-literate or semi-literate in their primary language, and thus a gap still remains between the language of the school and that of the home.

Many of the parents of these children are primarily concerned with surviving in this society and are not free to focus fully on the education of their children. Often they feel unprepared and depend upon educators to help their children succeed. This trust is often misplaced and leads to a perpetuation of failure for Hispanoamericano students.

These parents are being misled by certain educators who mistakenly place Hispanoamericano students who have minimal, survival English proficiencies into reading and language arts programs that require high levels of academic English proficiencies

(Cummins, 1980). In these cases, which tend to be common, the distinction between what is the minimum proficiency for academic achievement and what is needed to "fake it" becomes blurred and even dissolves. In turn, these students struggle to survive or give up trying to master the rigorous requirements of formal and abstract concept development in the second language that they seem to employ so well orally in everyday social interactions.

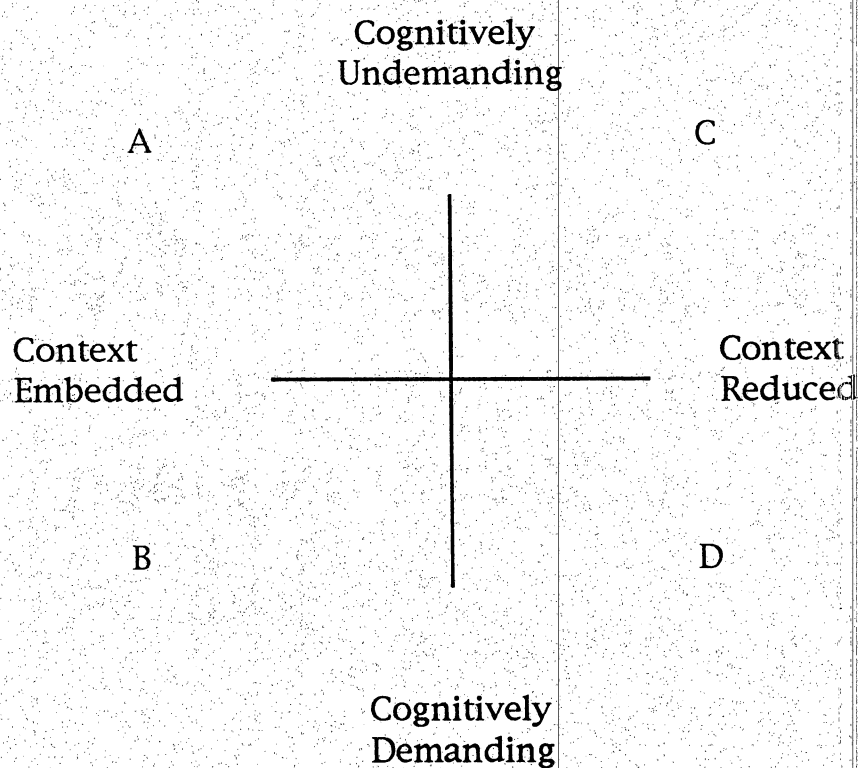
Cummins cites Donaldson (1978) who indicated that 'disembedding' of early instruction in reading and other academic tasks from students' out-of-school experience contributes significantly to educational difficulties. The language of the everyday world outside of the classroom is an example of cognitively undemanding and context embedded language, as depicted by Quadrant A (see Figure 1). Verbally arguing for one's point of view would be an instance of a context embedded, yet cognitively demanding use of language, and fall into Quadrant B.

Context reduced yet cognitively undemanding language would be exemplified by mastery of an automated task, such as being able to spell one's name and would relate to Quadrant C. Writing an essay would be context reduced and cognitively demanding, pertaining to Quadrant D. The more context reduced and cognitively demanding use of language relies heavily on linguistic rather than paralinguistic and situational cues. Students striving to understand concepts in a new language are at a distinct disadvantage since knowledge of the language itself is a prerequisite for successful negotiation of meaning.



## FIGURE 1: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTINUUMS

Range of Contextual Support and Degree of Cognitive Involvement  
in Communicative Activities (Cummins, 1980)





As a reaction to this conflict between the school and the homes of Hispanoamericano families, there develops an ambivalence or antipathy toward what the educational system says that it is providing and that which is realized in the history of limited and non-English speaking families. These families may, over several generations, become officially designated as monolingual in English, yet never go beyond the survival level of language proficiency among their members.

To break this cycle of intergenerational failure in the academic setting, a connection between adults and children within the school context must be made. If the gap is to be bridged between the parents desire to help their children in school while attending to their own needs as adults with different learning styles and areas of concern, a common area of identification must be found and utilized. The everyday world of the workplace for parents and the everyday world of the classroom for their children must somehow find a meeting ground to generate interest from both age groups.

This project focuses on Social Studies as the most salient area of the curriculum for the purposes of bringing about this mutual motivation for family literacy development. The convergence of themes that relate to Spanish dominant adults and their children is evident in this subject area. For example, it is part of the childrens curriculum for the second grade to understand the concept of "neighborhood" along with acquiring the vocabulary in English as part of their academic program. The parents of these children know

full well what a neighborhood is in terms of their experiential knowledge of an actual neighborhood within the greater contexts of a city, state, and country.

This project strived to tap into this knowledge as a means of making the formalized presentation of the same concept of neighborhood more accessible for young language minority students. In so doing, it structured a mediation of meaning among parents and children, with me as the teacher, setting the course of these interactions by "hanging" them on topics of common interest.

The unknown world of formal learning intimidates many Hispanoamericano parents in our society. They are not familiar with its workings or aware of its real relevance to their lives. Some come to feel that they are not equipped to help their own children who are farmed out to the so-called professional experts because that is the way things are done. A dichotomy between the school and the home results from not recognizing these parents' potential for contributing to their childrens learning. Moreover, life knowledge that Hispanoamericano parents could bring to the classroom on this one subject goes far beyond the developing schema that their young children are encountering in English. Thus, having the parents recontextulize the schools academic language and content in a manner that can be supported by family experiences in family study sessions should prove helpful to their children in the classroom.

Such a parent to child, bilingual approach to instruction would also tend to alleviate concerns about loss of cultural identity, on the

part of many Hispanoamericano parents. Many of these parents feel confronted with the open nature of American society with respect to certain standards of moral attitude and ethical conduct that threaten to disintegrate the family group in favor of an individualistic emphasis on life. Some of these parents may consciously or unconsciously understand the strong relation between culture and language. This could lead to an avoidance of learning English on their own in a decontextualized Adult Education class, even though knowledge of the new language could benefit their childrens studies.

This ambivalence or antagonism toward literacy which is understood among Hispanoamericano families as English literacy, or transitional Spanish literacy, may be based upon a desire to not set an example of accepting the majority culture and its liberal values. This behavior on the part of these parents, unfortunately may be perceived by many educators as simple indifference on the part of these parents toward their childrens education. This project strived to connect the desire of parents to have a better life for their children with their need to preserve the integrity of their cultural values. English as a key to the former and Spanish as the link with the latter were thus jointly employed in a balanced approach that mediated the needs of parents and those of children within the incongruent worlds of the school and the home. A harmonious synthesis of multicultural forces was the goal of this project.

The idea of older and younger members of Hispanoamericano families becoming more independent, and thus a threat to family

stability, may be outweighed by the drive to self-sufficiency on the part of these parents, who may not wish to continue depending on their children to broker for them to the English-speaking world. The children might also be motivated in their studies by witnessing the process of their parents' involvement in formal study for the sake of empowering themselves and their families.

This project developed from a synthesis of experiences with after school programs that have been offered to parents and children at Home Gardens Elementary School in the Corona-Norco Unified School District.

For several years, a program known as "Programa Entre el Hogar y la Escuela" (Program Between the Home and the School) has been offered for Hispanoamericano parents and their children at the school site. This program has been made available to parents throughout the Corona-Norco Unified School District, having been sponsored jointly by the Bilingual Education Office, the Counseling Office, the Migrant Education Program, and the Special Education Office of the District.

These sessions have been conducted at the school site by the school psychologist, and my bilingual instructional aide. The program was divided into two sections, namely, a parents component and a childrens group. The parents' group received their program in Spanish only from the aide while the children met separately, though simultaneously, with the school psychologist who presented an exclusively English program.

The themes involved in the parents' portion of the program included suggestions on how to help children with their homework, how to motivate children to succeed in school, and effective discipline strategies to improve parent/child interactions. The childrens section emphasized study skills, self-esteem, and appropriate behavior required for positive outcomes in an academic environment as well as in social situations that extend beyond formal schooling. Issues relating to health, drug abuse, and gangs were addressed in both the parents' and childrens groups.

Though important advice and demonstrations were given to parents involved in this program, the two groups of parents and children were not brought together in a "hands on" walk-through any of the content areas of the school curriculum nor was there any crossover of bilingual communication designed into this program. On this basis, some of the parents requested further assistance in order to help their childrens schooling.

## THE PROBLEM

Many Hispanoamericano parents rely on their children as "brokers" or go-betweens to bridge the cultural and language gap between the home and society at large. However, many of these children cannot count on their parents to broker for them between their homes and the school with its requirements for literacy and the study of academic content, often in a second language that their

parents are not facile in. Many parents, in fact, may assume that their children have already mastered the second language due to their ability to broker for survival in the everyday world.

While the beneficial effects of parents learning English as a second language for the sake of survival in this society is certainly a worthy pursuit, a language gap still remains between them and their children. It is not the dichotomy of Spanish and English that is the issue, rather the distinction between contextualized survival English that is necessary in the working world of the majority culture and the decontextualized, formal English that is required for their children to achieve success in the academic setting (see Figure 1).

The principal problem lies in bridging the gap between the perceptions of some parents as to what is required for their children to succeed in school and the level of oral fluency in English that these same children express as they successfully help their parents through the English speaking milieu. Unfortunately, as was indicated previously, the schools themselves may be responsible in some measure for creating this impression of mastery of the second language by designating these "intermediately fluent" (Krashen, 1988) children prematurely as "English readers."

The basis for establishing family study groups is the ongoing necessity for parents to become more active in their childrens education. It is common for parents, when their children are learning how to swim, to get into the water with them, to help them improve their skills. These adults, it is presumed, know the

fundamental importance of having their children learn how to swim, even though they themselves may not be able to. And yet, an adult because of his or her height, by merely standing in the water can still support and even save a child who may be in over his or her head.

In the field of formalized education, however, many Hispanoamericano parents do not feel comfortable "getting in the water" of the curriculum that their children are called upon to master. Unfortunately, under these conditions, many of the children are left to sink or swim academically. And inevitably, given the ever increasing shortage of qualified bilingual/cross-cultural teachers, those children who lack support from their home environment, simply go under. So the cycle of silent ambivalence or outright antipathy towards schooling continues for another generation, and on, and on.

An innovative resourcefulness on the part of educators is what is called for. The solution to this dilemma may be as close as the homes of these children. Fortunately, there is an overlap of abilities on the parts of parents and children that can complement each other, especially in the context of Hispanoamericano families who tend to be very united and close. The cooperative learning principle would allow for the beginnings of a meaningful mediated manner of communication in English, while maintaining and developing linguistic abilities in Spanish, with the parents being the key link and resource for their childrens education.

Thus the parents could broker between the formal knowledge



that the school is offering and their developing childrens awareness of the world by utilizing their life experiences as a way of bridging between the formal adult registers of discourse and the informal egocentric or peer-oriented registers associated with young children. A receptiveness and a pre-literate readiness could thus be created in the children that would better prepare them for formal instruction.

### THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question to be explored in this project is: How can family instruction in the curriculum content area of Social Studies be developed by way of the mediated actions of a teacher, parents, and their children in both the primary and second languages? The focus for answering this question involves using familiar themes from Social Studies lessons to make clear in the primary language that which is foreign to many Spanish dominant parents, that is, the nature of the content that is taught to their children by means of their second language.

Even though this was not a controlled experiment, the dependent factor, or result that was sought here, was the development and evolution of family study groups through recontextualized language usage, that would lead discourse into a more formal register, associated with academic pursuits, in Spanish and in English, for both parents and children. The independent factors, or forces that were active in bringing about such a result,



were the varying levels of parents' literacy in Spanish and levels of proficiency in English, the childrens oral language proficiencies and literacy levels in Spanish and in English, and my literacy and cultural awareness in both languages.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986), some language minority groups do better overall academically than others. At the heart of the matter is an often overlooked assumption that drives the educational system from preschool through graduate school in varying degrees. This has to do with the purpose for which an education is being pursued.

Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi indicated that even though most Americans glorify the notion of learning as a noble end in and of itself, the practical reality is that the educational system is geared for preparing students for saleable skills in the labor market and cultural values that will enable them to operate in the society at large. This curriculum is of course fueled by the demands on the agenda of commerce and industry in the private sector and the regulatory power of governmental agencies that are subject to the lobbying influence of the private interest groups.

With this as a background for all language minority students, then, how can this terminology be further refined to arrive at a feasible explanation to the obvious disparity in the academic performance among subgroups that are thus characterized. As stated above, the value of material success has been promulgated as a motivator in getting a good education in our society. The realization of this goal among members of a given minority language group is a strong reinforcer of belief that indeed the system does

work and that it is worth chasing the "American dream" of economic status as the measure of personal achievement. However, the lack of advancement on the part of other groups becomes a vicious cycle where few or no examples of members from the community are available to emulate.

Specifically, this is the case with what are referred to as "caste-like" minorities. Unlike certain groups of immigrants, or emigrees, who may return home one day, and who make adjustments to the majority culture as a necessary accommodation to achieve their goals, these groups do not have a reference point in their former homeland to gauge their progress. Members of caste-like groups have been involuntarily made a part of this society and relegated to a lower status by the forces of the majority culture operating by way of its institutions throughout the history of contacts between these groups. Many Asians are associated with the type of immigrant or emigree referred to above whereas Mexican-Americans tend to fall into the caste-like category.

In the case of Hispanoamericano immigrants, from Latin America, who when coming to this country, are inclined to identify with and associate with members of their own sociolinguistic group, there is a tendency to take on the same identity as the caste-like group of Hispanoamericanos that exists in the United States.

Native American peoples never had the same outlook as the Europeans with regard to the possession of and use of this land as their "own," in the sense of it being their property, yet there was

and is a bond that exists between indigeneous peoples and the earth that man-made borders cannot stop. The ancestors of Hispanoamericanos, who are a combination of Spanish and Indian peoples called much of what is now the United States, Nueva España, and eventually, México.

To be in the midst of a land that was once considered one's own, as is the case with Hispanoamericanos, land which was taken away by systematic efforts that disenfranchised legitimate rights that had been honored for generations, along with the setting up of an artificial border that continues to separate families, is a psychologically damaging instance of how a caste-like group is kept from moving ahead in this society.

With Hispanoamericanos there remains an "affective dissonance" or emotional conflict, according to Ogubu and Matute-Bianchi, when it comes to adapting to the cultural values of American society as a whole. This stems from what are termed "secondary cultural differences" as opposed to "primary cultural differences." The primary differences exist prior to two cultures having contact with each other, whereas the secondary differences occur as a result of their contact, and the subordination of the minority by the majority.

There is a resentment and a reluctance on the part of caste-like minorities to conform to values held by the majority culture. This usually takes the form of an either unconscious ambivalence or conscious opposition learning from the school as "acting white." The

behavior associated with this folk theory is characterized by either blatant opposition to school expectations as demonstrated by youth gangs in the barrio or more subtly by a passive resistance, which shows in mental withdrawal, lack of serious academic attitudes, high absenteeism from school, reluctance to do classwork, and disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Ogubu and Matute-Bianchi proposed that the academic failure of Mexican-Americans (and by extension, Hispanoamericanos) stems from "inadequate effort or low academic effort syndrome," that result from sociocultural factors created by caste-like barriers. The ambivalence towards education that exists here is a product of the frustration and mistrust and bitterness that comes from a conquered and displaced people. The folk theory among Hispanoamericanos then is that to participate in this society one must either follow a different path, acquire additional qualifications (for example, Anglo patronage), or "fight the system."

The evidence for a continuation of this cycle of poor academic performance, according to Ogubu and Matute-Bianchi, comes from an orientation that perceives schools as serving the perpetuation of patterns that have been detrimental to the cultural integrity of caste-like minorities. The intra-group reliance of long established Hispanoamericanos and recent immigrants in concentrated, often culturally isolated communities along with continuing racial discrimination against them only create a stronger self image and group identity of a "disadvantaged, disparaged minority," according

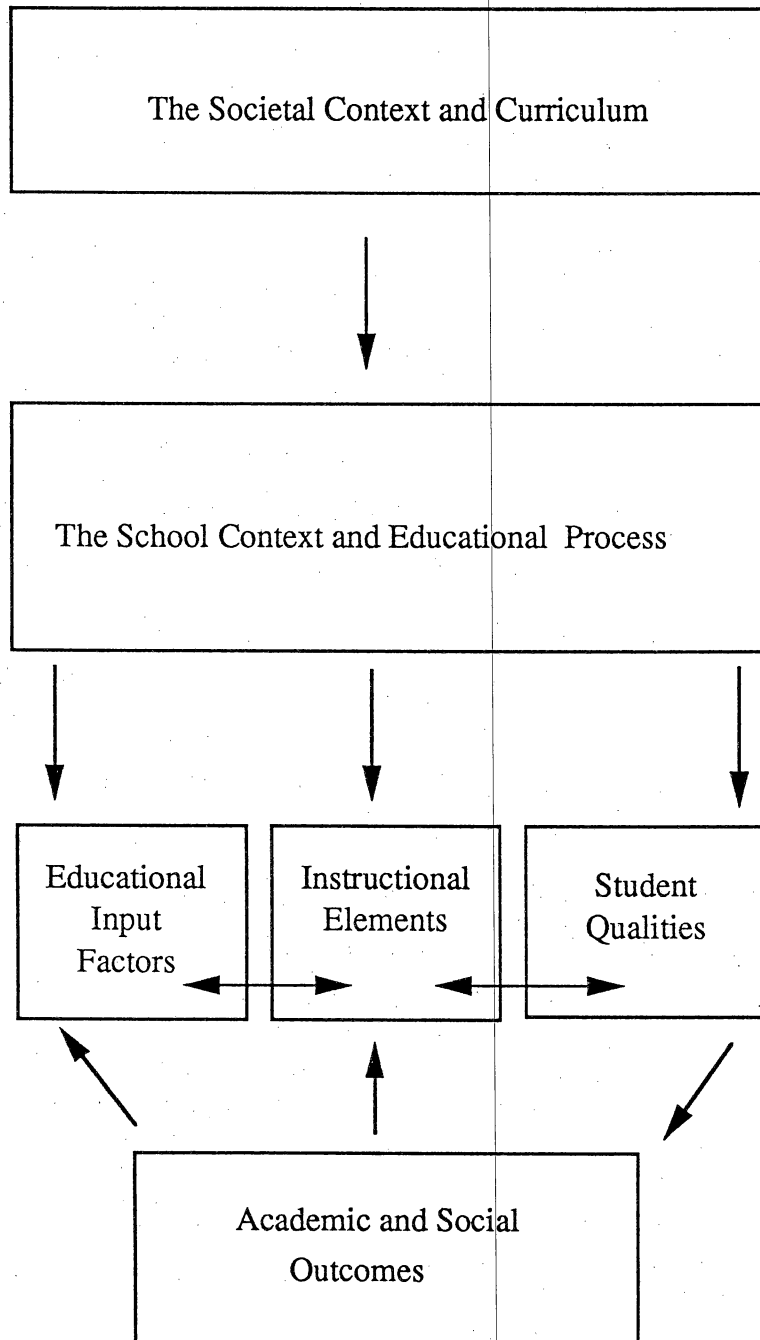
to Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi.

This scenario makes for a resistance to even selective acculturation as in the case of immigrant groups who take only what they can use from American society, while preserving their own cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the real benefits that can be taken from the larger society, such as a free education, are not taken full advantage of in this atmosphere of disillusionment. Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi indicated that this becomes a self-perpetuating vicious cycle based on the experiences that Hispanoamericano parents and other adults communicate to children who internalize "the connection or lack of it between school success and future employment or self-advancement."

This project utilizes the Contextual Interaction Model (Cortés, 1986), in order to establish the validity of the distinct disparity that exists among Hispanoamericano families, as compared to language majority families, in regard to formalized education. Within this model are found the societal context, and the school context, which is subdivided into educational input factors, instructional elements, and student qualities, all of which significantly influence student academic and social outcomes (see Figure 2).

To elaborate on this model, which is not a static structure, the societal context encompasses all of the factors that are found within the home and the culture of language minority students as well as those factors that operate in the general society. These include the family, the community, heritage, language status, educational level,

FIGURE 2: CONTEXTUAL INTERACTION MODEL  
(Cortés, 1986)



prosocial skills, and socioeconomic status. In addition, institutions, the mass media, culture/ethnicity, occupational opportunity, genres of language use, attitudes/perceptions of school, and other sociocultural factors make up the societal curriculum.

All of these factors interact with the school context, which has its own curriculum geared toward the educational process. Within the school context, educational input factors include staff knowledge of language minority students' (LMS) background, staff knowledge and use of effective instructional strategies for LMS, staff expectations for LMS, staff proficiency in the primary language of LMS, and staff attitudes toward the primary language of LMS.

Also involved in the school context are instructional elements that consist of primary language development opportunities, second language acquisition opportunities, prosocial skills development opportunities, positive teacher-student interactions, selection and coordination of appropriate core and supplementary curricula, and use of appropriate English and non-English language materials.

The other element within the school context is student qualities. These are comprised of oral proficiency in the primary and second languages, academic skills in the primary and second languages, attitudes toward the primary and second languages, communication skills in primary and second language use, perceptions and expectations of teachers and the school, prosocial skills, self-image, life goals, motivation, and sociocultural attributes.

The outcomes that are derived from this interaction between



the societal and school contexts are the presence or lack of same in the students of academic achievement, language proficiencies, prosocial skills, self-image, and other cognitive/affective skills that are developed in the course of schooling. The way in which all of these societal and school factors operate varies in degree of impact; nevertheless they are all present in any given learning environment, throughout both the officially stated and "hidden" curricula (Hernández, 1989).

As Díaz, Moll and Mehan (1986) found, "context specific performance" is an explanation for underachievement among language minority students. This view is in contrast to what is termed "context-free" interpretations of school performance that are based on either biological determinism which states that no type of academic intervention will have any significant effect on learning of language minority children because there is an inherent defective genetic feature to these students, or cultural determinism which holds that although certain cultural styles may be acceptable within the group's own setting, these modes are not beneficial in a classroom learning environment.

Whereas the context-free notions stress measuring the products of interactions in an academic atmosphere without taking into account the variables that led to these outcomes, the context-specific approach focuses on "the process of interaction between the individual and their environment," according to Díaz et al. This more holistic view gives a broader perspective to the whole situation in

which language minority students operate and learn, not only the classroom and the norms that the school uses to classify and measure progress, but the values that pupils bring to the school from the community and the integration of these when planning, implementing, and evaluating a curriculum that is culturally appropriate to the needs and the strengths of the learners.

Central to the issue of good planning is the attention paid to context in which interactions occur and the emphasis on the functions of language. Contexts do not simply refer to the physical surroundings, but "are constituted by what people are doing as well as when and where they are doing it," according to Díaz et al. So, it is the social environment that is constructed by members of a given group as they seek to interact in a meaningful way. In the case of schools, this interaction is to achieve an academic end.

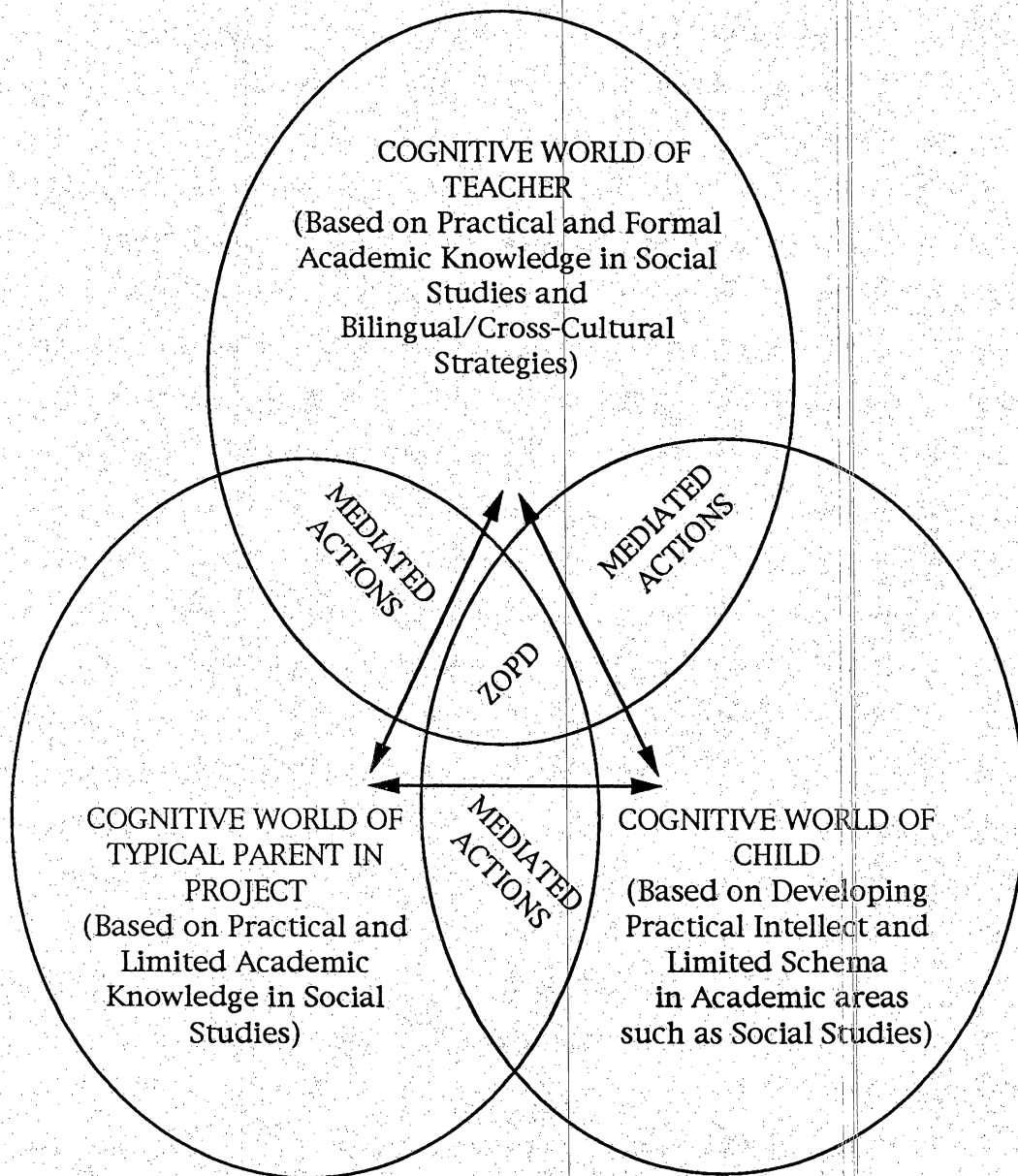
The functions of language are integral to achieving this purpose, since "communicative activities" that actually take place are the basis for pragmatic learning in the second language as they do in the first. This is opposed to the notion of an isolated or context-free use of language as an abstract formal semiotic system that has no immediate or obvious practical applications. Ogubu and Matute-Bianchi had indicated that the search for the origins of intellectual skills is within the child-adult interactional system." The reference here is to what has been termed the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1986) where any true learning will occur (see Figure 3).

Nevertheless, the social construction of knowledge that

FIGURE 3: ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT (ZOPD)

(Vygotsky, 1986)

Also shown are areas of mediated actions (Wertsch, 1991).  
Arrows represent a heterogeneity of voices that convey the  
multivoicedness of meaning (Bakhtin, 1981).



students are supposed to take part in while in the classroom is often not achieved by Hispanoamericano children due to a decontextualized teaching paradigm and methodology. To remedy this situation by bringing parents into the classroom, and allowing them to become “student teachers” was the aim of this project. The parents would be students themselves in that they would be learning about what their children are expected to learn. And these same parents would become other teachers to their children by conveying to them the sense that they gained from this participation.

In the study that was conducted by Díaz et al, there was a need to create this zone for good Spanish readers who were also conversationally fluent in English but who had been underassessed, and placed in a very low English reading group. In ignoring or discounting the high cognitive ability in their first language, the teacher in this case gave no importance to the larger context of these students' comprehension as measured by academic performance in their native language. This was a case of not valuing or bothering to consider the accomplishments of language minority students, and not treating them in a culturally specific and appropriate manner when introducing them to their second language.

To remedy this situation, Díaz et al used the already developed first language, Spanish, as a tool for gauging comprehension in the second language, English. They adjusted instructional methodology in a manner that was proper to the requirements of these students to move into a challenging zone that would allow them to utilize all of

their innate intelligence and primary cultural knowledge to negotiate meaning from the new source of information, the medium of English reading.

Thus Díaz et al were able to demonstrate the acquisition of comprehension in the second language by means of communicating in either their developing English speech or, as the particular question stretched their minds beyond their zone of proximal development, they could respond from their reservoir of Spanish fluency. This pedagogical adaptation that shifted the focus from phonics to comprehension of content as well as taking advantage of the specific context that these learners brought with them to the English classroom proved very valuable as reflected by "a three-year jump in participation in English reading."

Another example of how the context-specific approach was employed by Díaz et al was the adjustments made on the junior high level to a writing program that had been basically context-free, that is, the only purposes for writing were in responding to tests and assignments and for the teacher's evaluation. A culturally compatible module was set up that allowed for a community based orientation and provided a forum for meaningful dialogue on issues such as "youth gangs, unemployment, immigration, the need to learn English, and the like." Making writing context-specific in this manner, rather than leaving it as an isolated context-free skill with no broader implications, proved critical in connecting the community with the classroom.

Díaz et al indicated that homework became a focal point in family literacy as these writing activities became relevant to the participants. Again, the important point was that writing had a very specific purpose in the context of the school/home interaction and for this reason the students wrote in an expository fashion on subjects that had interest for them.

Since the present project involved bringing parents together with their children in the classroom, it is necessary to understand the ways in which the interior mental worlds of the child and the adult converge within the social context. This area has been probed by several pioneering minds in the field of child psychology and socio-cultural linguistics who have contributed a progressive series of insights on this matter. A deeper examination of the theory behind this phenomenon is required now to justify the design and methodology of this project.

The purpose of this project was to create a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1986) within a series of mediated actions (Wertsch, 1991) of sociolinguistic discourse among a teacher, parents, and their children (see Figure 3). The intermingling of childrens ideas with those of adult models while learning how to form concepts from the field of Social Studies was the format for investigation.

A slice of the overall academic curriculum was sampled by the families in this study to acquaint them with the themes that can be shared not only by reciprocal interest but by similar needs of children and parents. Cognitive academic development for the

younger learners and exposure to the requisites of this type of learning and how it relates to themes of basic survival for the older learners that might transfer over and enable them to aid their children was the focus for creating an interest on the part of parents.

This project proposed that parents could become part of a controlled academic setting to assist the development of their childrens naive impressions of a particular academic content area. If these parents could be included in a context that models specialized forms of speech, found in an academic setting, perhaps their childrens receptive minds could be shaped better for filling with the type of conceptual thought and language that they need to function in school.

Vygotsky (1986) proposed that mind is a social construction, built in part by language, and that all higher mental functions are based on internalized social interactions. If this is the case, then it becomes clear that it is of prime importance to understand the background of many Hispanoamericanos, in terms of their attitudes toward academic learning. Many parents tend to acknowledge that schooling is necessary, but do not place any particular premium on it, or in the other instance, they may have negative associations that resonate through their words in their childrens minds.

Since human knowledge is socially constructed, intelligence impels people to use language to describe their version of reality to others because human beings are social creatures that need to verify and validate their experiences through communicating and gaining

the corroboration of other people. Even if there are no outward negative utterances regarding academic learning on the part of Hispanoamericano parents, a communication is made to children by the attitudes that are held by adults on this subject. Thus, children take on the values that their parents hold regarding school and academic learning, which may not prove to be very positive.

Moreover, when parents do encourage their children to apply themselves to their school studies, this good will may not be backed up by any significant help on the part of these parents who are often not equipped to handle the demands that formal learning impose upon their children, even when this is offered in the primary language.

The problem of negotiating meaning as a language minority child straddling across the cultures and languages of the home and the school that interpret history, its institutions, and cultural values differently is a connection that must be made, hopefully with the collaborative bilingual voices of parents and teachers who can reach a new synthesis of knowledge through intentional thought expressed through cognitive academic language that seeks to discover patterns in human cultural differences and in the variety of nature, in the case of this project through an integrated and unified approach to Social Studies.

To elucidate on the paradigm that this project employed, further reference must be made to the concept of mediated action by which Wertsch (1991) attempted to reconcile an ongoing dilemma as



to the nature of mind. The traditional split over biology versus environment as the determining factor in individual development is seen as a false dichotomy by Wertsch who indicated that we have not been properly examining the question due to our own Western cultural bias that is grounded in an undue emphasis on the individual as viewed in isolation from cultural, historical, and institutional influences, which are the mediators of all personal activity. This situatedness, as opposed to the distorted perspective of atomism on the one hand and the other extreme of purely passive receptivity on the other, was the basis for his position on mediated action.

Wertsch's approach to understanding the most basic unit of human interaction, namely, language, upon which cultural, historical, and institutional superstructures are founded, had to do with how language is mediated by those using it. None of these spheres of human action operate without being intricately and innately involved with the others. That is to say, no culture develops outside of history or without its own institutions. Neither does any history occur when there is no culture in play, as seen in its institutional settings. Further, no institutions are established in a vacuum, rather they grow out of a cultural context over historical time.

This view supports the aforementioned Contextual Interaction Model, which designated the societal and school contexts as historically developed cultural institutions that carry certain inherent features respectively that influence the outcomes of student

learning.

This inertia against change that pits the ideal new solution against the comfortable old method of doing things is the dynamic that operates amid the process of all individual and collective development. So what may be seen as good on the individual scale may not be necessarily practical in terms of its implementation in society as a whole. The pragmatics of economic as well as the cultural, historical, and institutional realities or, at least their perceived realities, control what is and what is not allowed to enter into them and indeed become a very part of these domains. Thus, the potential for a beneficial impact upon Hispanoamericano families by involving parents through officially sanctioned and funded programs may be problematic in that there are those that lobby against any such support, as fiscally unsound and as a catering to a subclass that threatens the established order of the majority culture in this country.

In contrast to this polarizing viewpoint, Wertsch likened differing kinds of mental functioning among cultures to the internally regulated needs of the particular culture, selecting the types of tools for communication that it deems appropriate for its own specific requirements. He uses a tool kit analogy to demonstrate that various groups can use similar tools or semiotic systems in divergent ways, as determined by the situatedness of the contextual environment.

In this light, the context-free theories that attempt to attribute

poor academic achievement of language minority children to a biological determinism or a cultural determinism are seen as narrow and spurious explanations for the problems that many of these children have in an academic setting.

Hence, neither the isolated individual nor language as an abstract can properly be considered as separate or independent agents of mental action; however these two work together, to jointly negotiate and appropriate meaning within the greater arena of the cultural, historical, and institutional spheres, which all shape and produce the individual psychological outcomes as evidenced in membership or lack of inclusion in any given cultural framework.

Bakhtin (1981) set forth notions of the relationship between the heterogeneity of voices and the multivoicedness of meaning which carry this theoretical framework to another dimension (see Figure 3).

According to Bakhtin no one really owns meaning as individuals, but they do “rent” it. This can only be done, however, through the company of others. That is to say that meaning is shared by a larger or smaller group of people, but this group can never be less than the two that form a dialogue. Even the individual is not an isolate, being a product of the voices that shaped his or her existence, as per Vygotsky.

In looking deeper into the problem of multivoicedness of meaning, Bakhtin critiques the “conduit metaphor” that implies that the receiver of meaning is no more than a passive receptacle. This

view is based on a monologic transmission theory. In contrast, the perspective that Bakhtin espoused was broader, with regard to the function of language, that is, "to convey meanings adequately, and to generate new meanings." Bakhtin's position was that interpersonal and intrapersonal meaning are gotten through language in a dialogic process.

A dynamic is created that allows for a mutual negotiation of meaning between author and reader, speaker and listener, based on personal and shared experience, through the common "rented" mediational means of the language that is being employed. In this manner, it is possible, particularly in verbal communication to generate new thoughts, which in turn can play back and forth in a dialogue between speaker and listener. Even in reading, though the author is not physically present, the new thoughts that are born within the reader's mind can also enter into an inner dialogue with previously acquired information to create new meanings.

Based upon this view of how knowledge is arrived at, it again appears clear that a system of pedagogy that requires passive mental and emotional attitudes on the part of students who are to be infused with an external knowledge as a vehicle is filled with fuel, does not accurately represent the active nature of the human mind.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, Bakhtin resolves this issue by postulating that we derive sense from the utterances that surround words and not merely from the meaning of the words themselves as provided in a dictionary format. This inventory of utterances is

developed as we grow within the cultural setting of which we are a part. Thus, the voices that we hear coming from the outside go inside and, in turn, they are able to respond to other voices from the outside as well as initiate external and internal dialogues.

The transcripts that follow in this project and the accompanying analysis of the discourse in the light of the Contextual Interaction Model show how this process becomes realized in the dialogic interactions that occurred among Hispanoamericano parents, their children, and me. We all called upon these voices in a bilingual discovery and recognition of concepts in an academic yet practical course in Social Studies.

As children go through the process of maturation by listening to the voices of elders in a context-specific setting, the mind is not bound by our skin as Vygotsky pointed out. This also reflects Vygotsky's image of the zone of proximal development, where children actually intermingle their thoughts and those of adult models while learning how to form concepts that are beyond their idiosyncratic view of how things are. In this sense, the same literal meaning cannot be assigned as the final significant essence of any utterance because the very same words could be expressing microgenetic changes over time in terms of how the younger speaker intends them to be taken at any given moment. This is the heterogeneity of voices that are heard on any given subject.

Further, the same words may be spoken at different times by the same person using a multiplicity of voices. These voices

represent various levels of understanding that inhabit an individual's consciousness. Thus, for any culture there is not one homogeneous form of thinking, but a variety, each qualitatively different from the next, and used in accordance with the situation that is involved. This leads to the notion that Bakhtin had of a social language. For Bakhtin the real unit of speech communication is found in the utterance, not just the word, as was the case with Vygotsky. Each utterance is a continuation of a prior utterance and an invitation for another, and all of the semantic content is referential to the emotional world of the participants. Bakhtin thought that there are no neutral utterances. The voice that is chosen to speak in a given circumstance is "privileged" by the nature of the activity that the individual is oriented toward.

This relates to the field of pragmatics. Bakhtin stated that in contrast to word meanings which are only "rented," utterances are owned by individuals, that is by their voices. Nevertheless, their voices are still a representation of their own particular culture. The background within which this phenomenon occurs, is naturally one's national language, whether it be Spanish, English, Hindi, etc.

In addition to this, all persons operate within a social language which gives them a certain type of expression, as related to age, career, ethnic heritage, etc. To further enhance the diversity of possible voice expressions, Bakhtin posits another aspect to language, namely, speech genres which are typical or set styles of communicating, such as speeches, stories, jokes, etc. All of these

factors allow for a richness to be tapped by the originality of the individual persona, who may adopt as many voices as his or her talent and desire can call upon. In this sense, we all ventriloquate the voices that we hear after having made them "our own."

We speak through these voices which Bakhtin said we populate with our own intention. In doing this we give our utterances a unique flavor; nevertheless, as to the question, "Who is really doing the talking?" Bakhtin unequivocally holds that it will always be at least two voices, that of the speaker who is giving voice to the thoughts being brought forth, and the hidden voice or voices of internalized values that were once outer voices now possessing and directing the person to speak and act as a member of a social group that shares certain common values, calling for norms to be observed by all who would enter into communicative mediated action for the purpose of coming to a common understanding.

This project documented the heterogeneity of voices among participants and their own multiplicity of voices in a zone of proximal development, mediated by me, as the teacher, to create a multivoicedness of meaning for parents and their children in the academic subject of Social Studies. Formal as well as informal registers in Spanish and in English were ventriloquated so that old and new words could be rented and personal utterances owned by these families who found themselves in a polyglossia of dialogic utterances.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Most of the school children in our society, who are identified by the schools as limited English proficient, necessarily grow up in families in which parents speak a language other than English. Because many of these parents are not literate in their primary language nor in English, they are limited in their ability to help their children with content area primary or English language schoolwork. This lack of fluency also makes it difficult to feel comfortable about the school setting as a learning environment. Hence, there is a need to examine some of the variables that contribute to parents' involvement or lack of participation in ESL programs, which might enable them to assist their children with their studies.

Some of these parents may, however, become involved in primary language development and in learning English, through formal instruction, rather than indirectly by way of their children or others as a survival strategy. They may then be able to have a positive impact on their children's primary language cognitive and literacy requisites and on the acquisition of English academic proficiencies as a result of their own efforts at learning.

Since there is an ongoing concern and an ever increasing need to address the issue of effective methods that produce positive outcomes in the education of Hispanoamericano children, this whole issue rests upon the thesis that families are critical in fostering



success in literacy and learning in the content areas of the school curriculum. This behavior ideally begins in the home and it begins early. Research has examined significant background factors that contribute to primary and second language learning by parents through family literacy programs, which in turn, influence the primary language and cognitive development as well as the second language acquisition of their children.

In accord with the Contextual Interaction Model, it is necessary to examine this research in relation to the societal context, and the tensions that exist between the homes of language minority parents and the greater society. Further, within the school context, student qualities with regard to adult learners needs to be seen in relation to childrens styles of learning, to find areas of difference and similarity for planning lessons that would mediate between the worlds of parents and children. It is also critical to look at educational input factors that impact upon the paradigm that teacher may adopt with regard to planning curricula for language minorities, more particularly, adults. The other element that needs to be brought into this review of the research is that of instructional elements, in order to see how they are applied or not applied in culturally appropriate ways for language minority learners, whether they be adults or children.

Many studies have been undertaken in the field of family literacy and can be classified as those that address the issue of adult linguistic and literary development in general, those that focus on

adult second language learning, those that address children's oral and literary development generally, those that deal with children's second language acquisition, and those that focus on primary language support from adults to children in the development of language and literacy in both the first and second languages.

In reviewing the related literature in relation to the Contextual Interaction Model, and the work of Vygotsky, Wertsch, and Bakhtin, it becomes even clearer that learning is context-specific. It also becomes clear that there needs to be more specific attention focused on the area of simultaneous language and literacy development of parents alongside their children and how this affects their children's academic growth in the first and second language. This obviously is an area that requires further investigation. Nevertheless, the research cited in this project provides pertinent and valuable background information on the subject of family literacy.

### Cultural Factors

The importance of the societal context, educational input factors and their impact upon student outcomes as well as instructional elements were examined by Floyd and Carrell (1987), who looked at cultural background variables in adult second language learning. They proposed that the cultural origin of a text has a greater affect on ESL reading comprehension than does linguistic complexity, and that there is a relationship between the background knowledge that the student brings to the text and his or her ability to recall it.

They further posited that background knowledge relevant to reading comprehension can effectively be taught in the ESL classroom, with a consequential improvement in reading comprehension. Their conclusion was that background knowledge is more of a determining component of reading comprehension than is syntactic complexity.

The notion that the cultural context of a language exerting an even more powerful influence than the internal linguistic structure of that language during the course of its acquisition by second language learners goes directly to the types of educational outcomes, i.e., language proficiency and academic achievement, that are produced or not produced through ESL programs. The question becomes: Do students merely grasp the structure of their new language, in terms of its phonology and morphology, or do they understand the deeper nature of the language, the semantics and pragmatics of its actual use within the cultural context in which it is spoken, heard, written, and read?

The use of meaningful content for parents as well as children in the selection of Social Studies themes for this project took into account the needs of learners to have a purpose to hang any primary language development or new language acquisition upon. At the same time it was recognized that language has a rule-governed nature though arbitrary semiotic means for conveying meanings that underlie words.

### Illiteracy at Home

France and Meeks (1987) also addressed the issue of how the societal context contributes to educational outcomes for students while focusing on primary language support from adults to children in the development of language and literacy. Due to widespread illiteracy among parents of language minority students in particular, France and Meeks offered suggestions as to how this group of parents can help the literacy acquisition of their children. Reading to children at home, parental help with homework, parental encouragement that related reading to ordinary daily events were all seen as significant factors in developing literacy behaviors in children.

For parents who are semi or non-literate, however, these recommendations are not very feasible. Therefore, in the interim, other suggestions that France and Meeks made were to listen to children read, sign their homework, give spelling or math drills, and help with worksheet or workbook lessons. Parents can also ask children about their school day, use things at home to teach children, play games that help them learn, and visit the classroom to watch how they are taught. In addition parents can take their children to the library, borrow books from the teacher to give extra help, make a formal contract with the teacher to supervise homework or projects, and watch and discuss TV shows with the child.

The relevant information that applies to literacy behaviors in general as reported by France and Meeks' study offered valuable insight into how parents, even those with limited primary language

development, such as some of those that participated in this project, are able to provide important support to their children by working collaboratively with teachers.

### Hindrances to Learning

Other obstacles to learning besides illiteracy influence parents of minority language children in terms of their decision to pursue or not to pursue learning English as a second language. Hayes (1989) dealt with deterrents to the pursuit of the second language by adults that involve the societal context as well as instructional elements. The purpose of the research was to identify in a more detailed way the several variables that come into play in an adverse manner among those who wish to become ESL students.

This research identified four factors that impede students as well as five basic types of potential students and the reasons that they may forsake or not even begin the study of the second language. The four factors were self/school incongruence, low self-confidence, lack of access to classes, and situational constraints.

Five student types were catalogued as follows. Type 1, the largest group in the sample (41%), were young women who had lived in the United States for more than 6 years, tended to have at least a primary education, and who had school-age children, if they had children at all. They were least deterred by all of the above noted factors. Type 2, (30.5%), were primarily deterred by situational constraints, i.e., by such barriers as unavailability of child care or low priority of education compared with employment. They were

characterized as employed mothers.

Type 3, (18%), disclosed low self-confidence as being the most significant barrier to their participation, yet their level of educational attainment was somewhat higher than every other group, suggesting negative past experiences with schooling. They might be described as educationally insecure homemakers. Type 4, (5%), was distinctive due to its very high scores on two deterrent factors: self/school incongruence and lack of access to classes. This group could be called the culturally isolated unemployed. Type 5, (5.5%), exhibited an extremely high score on self/school incongruence, possibly due to their success in the working world, combined with their previous lack of education, which created the perception that learning English, and for that matter, literacy in Spanish, was not important. They can be termed noneducationally oriented workers.

Hayes' investigation provides very particular demographic data as to the adult learners and the factors that motivate or hinder their pursuit of their second language, aside from their specific reasons for doing so. It is interesting to note that the group that was least deterred by all of the constraining factors was Type 1, relatively young, non-employed mothers tending to have at least a primary education and school age children. This turned out to be the makeup of the majority of the class that is described in this project, and this was not by design, since both parents were invited to participate with no prior screening as to their educational background. It would appear that a principal motivating factor for

the Type 1 homemakers in Hayes' study would be to assist their children with schoolwork, the main reason that was reported by the parents in this project for wanting to learn English, as opposed to simple survival purposes.

### Intergenerational Literacy

Quintero and Velarde (1989) described a model for intergenerational literacy that took into account the importance of the societal context along with educational input, as well as emphasizing the force that student qualities exert on the classroom by way of participation or hindrance thereof. Primary language support from adults to children in the development of language and literacy in the primary and second language was the focus of this study.

Quintero and Velarde's family literacy project was called Family Initiative for English Literacy (FIEL). Parents and their young children worked together to bring experiences and ideas into written form and to read about them as a shared literacy event. The study was based on several assumptions, namely, that social context is of utmost importance in childrens learning in general and in literacy development in particular and that oral language is an integral part of the literacy development process. Additionally, learners enter school knowing that written language has meaning, but they cannot understand print usage when it is presented to them as isolated letters and sounds. And further, literacy behaviors are not restricted to books, but rather encompass many social and linguistic activities.

The FIEL program encouraged parents to improve their own literacy skills in English and in Spanish on their own at least once a week and to become involved with their children's education through helping them in a personal approach to reading and writing which was culturally based, providing interesting themes from the context of the adults and childrens own world.

Quintero and Velarde come closer to approaching the concept of parent/child literacy in primary language development and second language acquisition. Their study provides insight into the process of parent/child interaction in terms of English literacy development in a bilingual setting. Nevertheless, judging by the ironic acronym for the Family Initiative for English Literacy, FIEL, ( "faithful," when read in Spanish), it seems that the primary language was being utilized more as bridge to transition the families into English than to maintain a balanced bilingual approach to learning and literacy.

This present project attempted to take the idea of parents working with their children a step further by having the parents actually experience the stated school curriculum while allowing issues of the hidden curriculum to surface as part of the dialogic interactions among parents, their children, and myself, in a mediated manner that also utilizes the primary language as a bridge to cross over cognitively to the second, but leaving the bridge intact to cross back again from English to Spanish to form a polyglossia that extends from the home to the school and beyond to the greater societal context.



### School Outreach

Haycock and Duany (1991), continuing with the important theme of the societal context for learning, called for an outreach on the part of schools to Hispanoamericano parents, which would involve them in decision making, planning, and implementing activities. Empowering parents means giving them opportunities to demonstrate and use their special skills and talents, according to this study. Also, when recruiting parents, Haycock and Duany indicated that it would be preferable to begin with a nonacademic activity outside the school. This could be as simple as a dinner at a community hall. Use of other meeting places in the community before making the school available for parent activities tends to make parents feel that the school is concerned with the wider sphere of their lives and their childrens lives, beyond the classroom and the playground.

Other strategies that were recommended are assigning parent outreach activities to someone who knows how to work with Hispanoamericanos and is sincerely interested in involving them. Indeed, this is quite critical, as is developing different approaches for parents who are either non-English-speaking or have low literacy skills in either English or Spanish. It was shown in this study that simple things such as being outside the school in the morning and in the afternoon to greet parents who are dropping off or picking up their children makes the adults feel that there is a continuity between the school and home.

Reaching out to the Hispanoamericano community by establishing close relationships with religious, social, and cultural organizations is yet another integral element in establishing a close rapport between the school and the parents of language minority students that Haycock and Duany encouraged.

Encouraging Hispanoamericano parents who are currently active to bring in others and posting parent volunteers at school entrances to greet other parents and disseminate information on school and community events is another valuable strategy that this study mentions along with providing support services, such as child care and transportation, so that parents can have the opportunity to attend meetings or classes. Along these lines, free or affordable literacy programs for parents in both English and Spanish were suggested.

Haycock and Duany called for many worthwhile changes of attitudes and behaviors on the part of administrators and teachers, leading up to the offering of literacy programs in both first and second languages for parents. As indicated earlier, Home Gardens School had involved Chapter 1 limited English parents in classes in Spanish that focused on issues that were of concern to them with regard to their childrens education and the home and community contexts as resources for aiding in this process. Also, an introductory course in English was given that evolved into this present project, as an outgrowth of the parents' original desire to not simply learn survival English, but to equip themselves to deal with their childrens

academic assignments.

### Instructional Methods

How educational input along with instructional elements affect adult second language learning was investigated by Nelson, Lomax and Perlman (1984). They held that the particular pedagogical paradigm that is accepted by any instructor is what drives the instructional methods that are implemented and within which he or she operates. In this connection, they go into a deeper examination of two styles of ESL teachers.

The mechanical style, closely associated with the behaviorist tradition, involves repetition through language drills, correction of pupil errors in pronunciation, and little emphasis on informal dialogue between teacher and pupil. In contrast, is the communicative style, referred to as the integrative method, a fusion of the nativist and cognitive approaches. This style involves eliciting responses from pupils through questions, corrections of grammatical instead of pronunciation errors, and encourages reciprocal dialogue and creativity.

The integrative model described by Nelson, Lomax and Perlman includes cognitive ability in the first language as a predictor of second language acquisition. The findings that stand out in this regard are that first, integrative teaching is not only a factor in contributing to language proficiency in the classroom, but positively affects attitudes and motivation that transfer outside the classroom. Second, functional language ability is observed to be an important

part of the process of language acquisition, and should be a measure in assessing its progress.

The informal dialogue between teacher and pupil that Nelson, Lomax Perlman indicate as being the communicative style was part of the design and methodology of this project. The importance of dialogical interchanges as well as more formalized exchanges such as question and answer utterances were integrated to draw on the cognitive resources of the participants, both parents and children, that would bring the norms of home discourse and school discourse together in a series of mediated actions that were intended to transfer beyond the classroom and have a positive impact upon parent/child interactions in developing language and literacy.

#### Older Adult Models

How educational input affects educational outcomes was also addressed by Landerholm and Nelson (1985). The concept of bilingual support was examined by them in a study of older adults who served as literacy models for young children. Landerholm and Nelson contended that, in modern adult education, adults bring extra years of life experience to learning situations. This being the case, adults are frequently impatient in meeting learning goals and tend to act more independently. Adults are also sensitive to failures in learning efforts and expect to be treated as mature individuals. Their older age does not make them impaired or unable to learn, and indeed, they have a more powerful motivation to learn.

Due to these sensitivities and a sympathetic feeling for younger

learners, older adults, often grandparents, who were members of the community where the school children lived, were able to interact in a more meaningful manner with the children in this study, including bilingual dialogue, than many of the professional staff were unable to do at the school where the study was conducted.

By demonstrating a definite advantage, in terms of primary language support through the utilization of adult role models for literacy activities, Landerholm and Nelson continued the call for children and adults to be brought together in a learning situation, where they can not only teach, but reach children with their sympathetic and experienced culturally sensitive manner.

The complaint from teachers often is that language minority parents do not care about their childrens education. In many cases, however, due to the lack of knowledge on the part of teachers about these parents' ambivalence or outright sense of intimidation about the rigors of formal education that their children face, there is no dialogue as to exactly how parents can help,

In this project, rather than telling Hispanoamericano parents about what their children need to know, or even showing them, the opportuntiy was presented for these parents to involve themselves with actual lessons that had them working one on one with their children as the adults were walked through the process of schooling and exposed to the academic language that is used in that context. This enabled these parents to experience what it is like when the doors close on their children after dropping them off at school. This

resulted in a more powerful experience than any open house or parent/teacher conference could ever provide for parents.

### Pedagogical Paradigms

Instructional elements were viewed as having a significant impact on learning in an earlier study by Wolfe (1968) which raises important points that still need to be addressed. The interrelatedness and differences between adults' second language learning and childrens second language acquisition is examined by Wolfe (1968), who makes a basic distinction between the natural or "unconscious" way in which children acquire a language (either first or second versus the artificial or "conscious" manner in which adults learn their second language. A critique was made of the widely used techniques of drills and exercises that have students merely parroting prepackaged dialogues that must be committed to memory.

There was also a call for textbook writers to distinguish between concrete and abstract sentences, concrete being advocated as a beginning level where language learners are more readily able to make sense of actual objects in their immediate environment, rather than starting to work with concepts that require imagination to comprehend. For example, sentences such as "Now I am standing up." which can be demonstrated, instead of "Where are you from?" which calls for a departure from the here and now circumstances of the student.

Another criticism that was made by Wolfe is the overuse of the native language in teaching the second language. Wolfe indicated

that translation as a learning technique means operating in terms of the native language as a base from which one departs and to which one invariably returns, thus considering the target language as a distant object of curiosity which acquires meaning only in terms of a recasting into the lexical and syntactic categories of the native language.

According to Wolfe, this external approach to language is not as natural as the internalizing approach, which avoids translation, which, it is suggested, is probably best drilled after the native and target languages have both been independently mastered. While these points are well taken, it is important to realize that Wolfe espoused an immersion style of teaching with adult learners, with little or no reliance on cognitive development in the primary language which is critical for children who have not completely developed their cognitive abilities, thus making code switching totally appropriate as an instructional strategy for teaching the second language. This would be especially true when sheltered content lessons are supported by bilingual informal dialogue as part of a communicative style and integrative method as per Nelson, Lomax and Perlman.

The basis for Wolfe's position appears to be the idea that each language is not merely a different code of a universal semiotic system, but that each is a unique expression of the cultural context in which it grew and is embedded. According to Wolfe, a contrastive linguistic analysis between two languages is thus considered futile at



best as one should rather look at the internal logic of each language in its own right as a guide to the proper understanding of that language.

A formula was outlined by Wolfe for presenting new structures in the target language which focus on the teacher drilling until the student succeeds in transferring his attention to a distracting outside element while simultaneously producing the new structure correctly and unconsciously, shifting attention completely to the content of the utterance and no longer thinking consciously about the syntax underlying the statement.

Wolfe's pedagogical analysis does validate the idea that languages are embedded in the context of cultures, but this fact may be more useful with adult learners, rather than with young children where reliance on their developing cognition in their first language would be a preferred strategy for planning instruction (Cummins, 1984).

One of the purposes that the parents identified for participating in this project was to learn more English, but this was modulated by the presence of their children next to them. The class therefore, did not restrict itself to the use of English, even on a sheltered basis, due to the aim of exploiting the cognitive content that the young learners needed to express in their still developing Spanish as the language link from the home to many of the concepts presented in school.

### Learning Styles

The force that student qualities exerts on the classroom or



hinders participation was seen in a study by Reid (1987). The results indicated several general conclusions that should be considered when designing a curriculum for ESL students. First, ESL students often differ significantly in various ways from native speakers of English in their perceptual learning style. Second, ESL students from different language (and by extension different educational and cultural) backgrounds sometimes differ significantly from each other in their learning style preferences. Third, analysis of other variables, such as gender, length of time spent in the United States, and level of education, indicates that they differ significantly in their relationship to various learning style preferences. And last, Reid suggested that as ESL students adapt to the U.S. academic environment, some modifications and extensions of learning styles may occur.

Reid's inquiry looked into the preferred mode of adult students for six learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group learning, and individual learning, while taking into account that approximately 90% of traditional classroom instruction is geared to the auditory learner. Curiously, most of these adult learners preferred an individual to a group learning style. This may tie in with the fact that adults have established their identity and are relatively independent, as opposed to school children who are more dependent on the group dynamic since they are still involved in personal formation through a process of socialization.

The research conducted in Reid's study provides a useful

background in terms of identifying and distinguishing differences between adults and children by way of the adults' preferences for styles learning. The design and methodology necessary to incorporate age appropriate adult instructional methods, in contrast to strategies employed with a same age group of younger learners, or for that matter older learners, proved helpful for this project which involved cross-age family groups.

#### Collaborative Family Study Groups

Maclay and Askov (1988) were also concerned with the impact that student qualities exert upon formal learning or the lack of it. They called for a whole family approach to education. The objective of their study was to help parents to obtain basic literacy skills through computer-assisted collaborative instruction. Another goal involved was to enable parents to aid their children, ranging from preschool to high school ages, by reading to them and modeling basic literacy behaviors.

Chapter 1 parents were selected to participate in the study, and the overall findings showed marked changes in the attitude and behavior of the children in regard to literacy development. This was especially the case with those children who were involved in a module where they worked alongside their parents. There was, however, reluctance demonstrated on the the part of some parents to work directly with their children, due to feelings of embarrassment over their own inability to read.

It is clear that teachers must be willing to follow the needs of

the adult students in planning a program and setting instructional goals. In spite of the positive effects that may be attained by some adults working with their children, it is necessary to honor the wishes of parents who prefer not to participate directly with their children in a formal learning situation. It is a virtually universal concern of parents that they be viewed with respect, whether they are helping their children in schoolwork, or the children are assisting them in functional language usage as when the children "broker," for them, or as in this study, an applied mutual effort at language proficiency.

Maclay and Askov focused on attitudes and behaviors of children and adults in the development of literacy in their first language, that is, English. Nonetheless, their findings proved useful in designing this project for Hispanoamericano parents who were paired with their children also with the same differencing cognitive-developmental level due to their age differences. The result would be a heterogeneous mix of language and literacy proficiencies among the adults and the children in Spanish and in English which made for a polyglossia of language. This extended from informal to formal registers and speech styles that were generated during this project.

## SUMMARY

Important factors that affect the primary and second language development of adults and impact upon the primary language

development and second language acquisition of their children have been reviewed in light of the Contextual Interaction Model. These variables include the role of schools in reaching out to the minority language community, the fact that primary language illiteracy or semi-literacy exists in many of these homes, as well as other sociological and psychological hindrances that are present in the adults' decision to pursue or not to pursue the learning of English as a second language. These include cultural factors that influence adults' attitudes and behaviors with regard to the second language.

The crucial necessity for an intergenerational approach to literacy was seen in the studies that focused on parents and older adult role models working with children. However, the critical distinction was made between the learning styles of adults and children that should be considered when designing or adopting a particular pedagogical paradigm and the accompanying teaching methodology that is required for age appropriate instruction. In this regard, parents and children cooperating in study groups was shown to have positive benefits as well as drawbacks due to adult attitudes about learning alongside their children.

Throughout most of these studies there is a thread of constant interplay between the dominant and minority cultures that has a tremendous bearing on the way the school educational process is presented, perceived, and accepted or rejected by language minority parents. The basis for whichever response is taken are the values that are held by those parents who are compelled to confront and

struggle with their childrens sociolinguistic development as measured in their academic progress and social functioning.

The specific subject of language minority parents and children communicating effectively, not only in their primary language, but in the dominant culture's language, English, which is in the majority of cases the medium of instruction for non-English proficient school children, remained as a pressing issue of historic proportions that calls for an innovative exploration and reflective evaluation of new approaches to reaching Hispanoamericano families in order to have them gain more insight and input into an educational process that has been institutionalized by the mainstream culture.

If language minority parents are invited to have their own voices heard as other teachers to their children through a collaborative effort on the part of the home and the school, by acting as mediators for change, then perhaps a sense of having a stake in the educational system will be born, bringing about a powerful alliance among professional educators and parents, the childrens first and most important educators.

Language minority parents have life experiences and recognize concepts that developing children do not yet grasp. Even though these parents are competent in expressing themselves in their primary language on a given subject such as making change or telling time, they may not be able to respond to their childrens questions in these areas when faced with giving them a decontextualized explanation in the primary language, let alone the second language.

Dewey (1951) stressed that education must be seen as a participation in as opposed to a preparation for life. He indicated that education is a reorganization or reconstruction of experience which increases the meaning of prior experience while at the same time directing the course of subsequent experience. This project proposed to offer a synthesis of the ideas that have been discussed thus far, and to formulate a curriculum that addresses this issue of a sociolinguistic gap that continues to widen between the school and the homes of Hispanoamericano families.

In the reconstruction of experience by Hispanoamericano parents, as organized in this project, the methodology was to reorganize and add meaning to an academic decontextualized curriculum, and so increase the ability of these families to function and have positive outcomes from the educational process. To begin to bring the parents into the school so that they could interact with their children in an academic context and take home with them a new understanding of how they can help their children in their schooling was the objective of this project.

## PROJECT DESIGN

In designing this project, the negative notions that minority language parents either do not care or that they cannot contribute in any significant way to their childrens academic progress were both seen as misconceptions and as obstacles in attempting to set up a program of family literacy development.

The purpose of this project was to plan and implement a program of adult instruction for non-English-speaking parents that would enable them to maximally assist their children both inside and outside of the classroom, through a bilingual approach to Social Studies. This approach was to assist parents in their endeavor to understand what their children are required to learn by recontextualizing for families the academic discourse inherent in formalized learning.

However, given that cognitive development and second language acquisition are long term processes, and that this project was constrained by the context of a narrow frame of time, the measure of outcomes would be restricted to the products of oral, reading, and written development from subjects involved over the course of this pilot model program.

The initial feedback from the parents who participated in a precursor ESL course that led up to this project as to why they would want to learn English is divided into five basic motivations, listed in descending order of importance: 1) "ayudar a mi hijo/a" (help my

child with school work), 2) "comunicación con las personas" (interpersonal communication with others in the dominant culture), 3) "desarrollar mejor/bien propio" (personal development), 4) "buen trabajo" (a good job), and 5) "saber el idioma" (to know the language).

The least important motivation was to learn English as an end in itself, and the most important motivating factor was for parents to assist their children in their academic work. Based upon this input from parents, this project would be designed so that the objectives of the class would conform to the functional desires that the parents expressed originally and reiterated at the initial orientation.

Therefore, the focus of this project would be academic, in terms of providing assistance to parents who wanted to help their children with their schoolwork in their primary as well as second languages. The methodology would feature a modeling of the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic functions of Spanish and English oral and written formal discourse. This would be accomplished in a culturally appropriate context by examining selected Social Studies themes that held high interest for parents and their children, and therefore could be shared and studied together.

An integrated skills approach that encompassed listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a holistic non-hierarchical sequence of performance that precedes competence would be utilized. The parents would be informally evaluated upon entering the course, then on a regular basis, and upon finishing the program as to the



benefits that they were deriving from participating in the program. The children would be monitored in like fashion by checking for their understanding as measured in their aural, oral, reading, and written participation in Spanish and in English in Social Studies' concepts.

An analysis of the discourse among the participants in this project shows a convergence and overlapping of the mental worlds of children, parents and myself. These personal interactions may be pictured as circles that share a common area where they intersect and overlap (see Figure 3), in a non-static rippling out effect that pushes the zone of proximal development outward, and as with a stone thrown into a pond, then receding back, with the stone of new knowledge sinking into the inner world of verbal thought where it becomes part of a person's makeup. But unlike the stone in the pond, which stays on the bottom, this knowledge can be brought up and out again, as the internalized becomes re-expressed in outer speech.

This is the evidence for having successfully crossed over the zone of proximal development, of ownership of a concept, the ability to recontextualize what once was outer and objective in subjective terms that are understood by others. These dynamic, though often subtle, individual encounters must also be seen as mediated actions that oscillate within the orbit of those internalized social contexts of the subjects' culture, the school atmosphere, and greater societal context, all of which impact upon cultural, institutional, and historical

values.

Given the basis of this class as being a way of assisting Hispanoamericano parents to help their children in developing literacy in their primary language as well as for both parents and children to acquire second language proficiencies, my role as the teacher was very directed. As an authority and a coach, I provided the structure of an informational lecture accompanied by readings from the text as well as followup written practice.

Since the students, both adults and children were brought together to learn jointly, it was necessary to overcome any mental reservations and emotional resistance based on real or imagined deficiencies on the part of the learners. I needed to be able to give immediate feedback based on the needs of the subjects and the interest generated by the topics, and take a different tack, according the winds of dialogic encounter to listen and discover personal communications that recontextualized the text.

The format for the lessons would be a brief introduction and then a reading from the text in Spanish by me conjointly with the parents and those children who would be able to do so, while the others ventriloquated these voices and followed along in the text, attempting to occupy their own respective zones of proximal development. This would be followed by written questions to check for understanding that were answered by the parents and children in Spanish. As a guiding frame, I would write what certain students spoke on the board for those students, adult or child. who were semi-

literate in Spanish.

After the lesson was given in the primary language, the same material would be introduced and read by me as I modeled in English and the parents and children ventriloquated my utterances, a microsecond later. Again, a followup written activity occurred, this being written by me as the model, based on oral input in English from the subjects as they based their thought upon what had already been written in Spanish.

A transcription of these discourses shows how I, as a facilitator, providing a stimulus to the class and how the students were bringing their interest into a zone of proximal development that involved discussion of decontextualized cognitive academic language in terms of more immediate relevance to their families.

For the second grade, the Social Studies strands that are considered "Essential Learnings" and are a part of the students' cognitive-academic language development are historical literacy, ethical literacy, cultural literacy, geographic literacy, economic literacy, and sociopolitical literacy.

All of these strands are highly correlated to the survival English topics that are characteristic of adult learners. Through use of the newly adopted second grade social studies text Gente que conozco (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston) and its English version, Some People I Know, parents would be introduced to the book that their children use, while relating the themes of adult interest to an aural and oral primary language development and second language

learning process. Topics such as "Depending on Others," "Knowing Your Family," "Living in Our Country," and "People Who Have Made a Difference" would be covered.

### DATA NEEDED

The data involved for this study relates to the level of participation of parents and their second grade children in a parent involvement program focused on Social Studies as the medium for meeting the learning needs of both the younger and older learners. A zone of proximal development would thus be created for a family effort at developing academic language use, employing a language experience approach that relies on the formalized knowledge as well as life experience of the parents in Spanish and in English and the developing basic interpersonal and cognitive academic skills of the children in Spanish and in English. A bilingual, sheltered integrative approach that encompasses all levels in a cooperative wrestling of meaning from utterances and text would be needed to examine the efficacy of such a module.

The discourse generated from these interactions among a parent and their child, a parent and myself, a parent with other parents, a parent with other children, a child with me, a child with other children, and me with a number of other parents and children is the heterogeneity of voices that occurred. All of these dialogic utterances would be gathered together for analysis to cull out a

multivoicedness of meaning.

## SUBJECTS

All of the parents who participated in this project were limited English speakers, who identified themselves as natives of either Mexico or Central America. With two exceptions where the parents were illiterate in Spanish, these parents could be characterized as having a basic, though limited, educational background in their country of origin, showing some literacy skills in Spanish.

The majority of their children were born in the United States. Eight parents and their eight children out of the total group, which fluctuated up to thirteen parents and their thirteen second grade children, were the subjects for analysis. Their level of participation through observation of listening skills, oral responses, and efforts at reading and writing would serve as the raw data to glean for discourse analysis.

The class was held once a week, at one and one half hours per session for nine weeks. After four sessions that were held for the parents only, the remaining five meetings had the children seated with their parents as a family team, each team having one copy of the Spanish Social Studies textbook, and one of the English version.

## METHODOLOGY

The goals of this course would be to expose and highlight the various strands of the Social Studies curriculum, first in Spanish and then in sheltered English, in order to acquaint the parents with the academic content that is being taught to their children as part of the "Essential Learnings" that the Corona-Norco Unified School District has delineated. As stated previously, the purpose for this was to assist these parents in understanding and helping their children with their schoolwork, at least, in this area of the curriculum.

The methodology to be used would be dictated by the needs of the adult learners, giving deference to their particular academic and language backgrounds, as reported by them, as well as considering learning style differences between adults and children. As the heads of households, a necessary level of deference needed to be considered in designing the objectives of this program, in view of the fact that their own as well as other children would attend the classes jointly with other parents.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Videocassette recordings of the interactions among the parents, the children, and me were made, and samples of written work were collected for analysis. The following excerpts from selected lessons illustrate how I created a mediating effect for the students by "scaffolding" or framing the contextual interaction between the home and the school as well as between parents and children for the purpose of assisting in positive outcomes to formalized learning for Hispanoamericano families.

The analysis of these transcripts also shows how adults used their language to interpret cognitive academic concepts based upon their life experiences. Finally, these transcripts serve as examples of childrens uptake of adult language in the process of forming inner speech in a zone of proximal development where meaning was collaboratively negotiated by me, parents, and children who entered into the act of learning. This was accomplished collectively through the medium of bilingual informal, as well as formal, registers that recontextualized the decontextualized language of Social Studies.

How can Hispanoamericano family instruction in Social Studies be developed by the mediated actions of a teacher, and a group of parents, and their children in the primary and second languages of these families for the purpose of having parents help their childrens academic pursuits? That is the research question that this project addressed. The following discourse analysis of the verbalizations of

some of the participants in this project answers this question. The analysis, interpretation, conclusions, along with the implications and recommendations that follow are based on excerpts from the transcripts that spanned a period from February 4, through March 4, 1993 (see Appendix A for full transcripts). Sociocultural as well as linguistic features that were a part of these dialogues were the foci for analysis.

The purpose of this analysis was to elaborate upon the mediated context created in the class by me, the parents, and their children. The utterances that took place were disclosing the limits of the zone of proximal development that each learner was operating within. I was thus able to respond to individual learners and to the group based upon these dialogues which served in turn to expand the zone of proximal development., This occurred as new knowledge or recontextualized knowledge acted upon concepts which followed, having been built upon the previously gained ground of understanding.

The objectives of this lesson were to acquaint the parents along with their children with the Social Studies strands of cultural literacy, geographic literacy, and economic literacy within the context of the topic, bananas. This would be accomplished by recontextualizing information gathered from the text to a pragmatic understanding of the process involved in the growing, harvesting, processing, distribution, and purchase of this fruit.

The previous lesson had been on peanuts, along the same lines,



and included a discussion of other crops native to the Americas, such as potatoes, sunflowers, chocolate, tomatoes, corn, coffee, and pumpkins, leading up to bananas.

Transcript 1- February 4, 1993:

"Banana Production, Transportation, and Marketing"  
& Discourse Analysis<sup>2</sup>

- (1) Teacher: "Bueno. La vez pasada estabamos platicando sobre el cultivo de los cacahuates. ¿No? ¿Hay alguien quien recuerde el nombre del estado de que estabamos hablando la vez pasada?"
- (2) Adult 1: "Atlanta."
- (3) Teacher: ["¿Como?"
- (4) Adult 2: "Alabama"]
- (5) Teacher: "Sí. Atlanta es la capital de un otro estado que está al lado de Alabama, que se llama Georgia."
- (6) Adult 1: ["Sí.
- (7) Child 1: "¿Georgia?"]
- (8) Teacher: "Sí. Y hay un presidente de los Estados Unidos quien nació en Georgia y también era agricultor de cacahuates. ¿Hay alguien quien recuerde su nombre?"
- (9) Adult 1: "Jeemy Carter."

<sup>2</sup>Brackets [ ] indicate an overlap of dialogue. A pause of over 3 seconds is designated by ...

(10) Teacher: "Sí. Jimmy Carter. Así es. Entonces, como los niños les gusta los sándwiches de crema de cacahuate mucho, estábamos estudiando sobre el cacahuate...Pero también a los niños les gusta mucho una fruta que...¿alguien pueda decirme cómo se llama esta fruta que está en la página veinte?" (everyone looking at the Spanish textbook)

In Utterances 1-10 an Adult 1 miscue of Atlanta for Alabama triggers learning within a zone of proximal development. After I point out the distinction, and introduces the name Georgia, Child 1 asks for confirmation by repeating the word in Utterance 7. This act is an example of how children appropriate knowledge and language in a zone of proximal development (see Figure 3). Children, who may still not understand the difference between the concepts of city and state, but are nevertheless processing the vocalizations that adults produce, whether they be parents or school teachers.

The life experience of Adult 1 was manifest in spite of the aforementioned miscue as evidenced by the correct identification of President Carter, in a subsequent utterance, as the most famous peanut farmer from Georgia. The confusion between Alabama and Atlanta that was initially displayed may have been linked in this subject's mind to the topic of peanut growing that triggered an association with Carter/Georgia, and thus Atlanta.

While pointing out the distinction between Alabama and

Atlanta, I deliberately avoided correcting Adult 1's pronunciation of "Jeemy" in Utterance 9, rather noting the correct identification of the former president and modeling the proper pronunciation as part of Utterance 10.

The continued negotiation of meaning was confirmed in the dialogue that transpired between Adult 1 and me in Utterances 12-26.

- (12) Teacher: "Banana. Entonces, a veces, ah, unos dicen guineos en Centroamérica o plátanos."
- (13) Adult 1: (with some hesitation) "No. Los plátanos son otros."
- (14) Teacher: "Los plátanos son otros. [En Centroamérica...]"
- (15) Adult 1: "En Centroamérica...es de la banana.]"
- (16) Teacher: "Es de la banana, pero los plátanos son los que cocinan, como yo he comido plátanos fritos y también a veces se los hechan en una sopa que yo acabo de tener para mi cena hoy que se llama 'gallo en chicha.' ¿Lo conocen?" (mutual laughter among all)
- (17) A few adults: "Sí." (others shake their heads)
- (18) Teacher: "Sí?" También se cocinan los plátanos como las papas[Adult 1: "Ah hah."] y emblandan y son bien buenos. Y he tenido otros también que se sirven tostados...como se cortan en pedazitos y se comen de boquitas."

- (19) Adult 1: "Para comer así como se comen los churritos...[Teacher: "Así es."]  
Como la papita frita."
- (20) Teacher: "Sí. Como los tostaditos de maíz." (recipricol headknodding among several adults) Entonces hay muchos formas de usar lo que vamos a decir son los platanos...¿No?"
- (21) Several adults and children: "Um hum."
- (22) Teacher: "Entonces como son parecidos los plátanos y las bananas, son como primos de la misma familia. Unas son más dulces y los otros más, ah...más blandos...¿No?"
- (23) Adult 1: "Sí. En el país de nosotros les llamamos los machos."
- (24) Teacher: "Los machos. Sí, hay unos grandotes que se venden en Los Angeles que son bien gruesos y negros."
- (25) Adult 1: "En Los Angeles se venden. Es cierto. Y aquí los venden."
- (26) Teacher: "En el Rancho Market, sí se venden. Son negros y bien maduros. Bueno vamos a estudiar en español un parte de la historia de los plátanos y después vamos a estudiarla, pero en inglés."

The polyglossia among Hispanoamericanos can be seen in this

instance. I am Mexican-American with Irish blood and am married to a Salvadoreña while Adult 1 is a Hondureña. Adult 1 speaks up, hesitant at first, in Utterance 13, when I do not immediately make clear the distinction between plátanos and bananas. In the subsequent dialogue more instances of a heterogeneity of voices as well as a multivoicedness of meaning are seen as in Utterances 16-17 where only a few of the class, who were mostly Mexicanos, recognized a dish of rooster cooked with plátanos and vegetables that is typical of Central America and parts of southern Mexico, such as Yucatán.

The same word such as "plátano" used in contexts as different as one country is from another can conjure up a different concept for various individuals. The word "banana" in Spanish refers to a fruit that is eaten raw, being distinct from "plátano" which is a related fruit that is cooked. The writers of the textbook, in attempting to appeal to children who usually love bananas, failed to make the appropriate sociolinguistic choice of words, using the word "plantain" instead of "banana" in the Spanish translation.

In spite of this editorial miscue, the significance of the table fruit versus its starchier cousin was clarified through the mutual confirming examples that were brought forth in the exchange between myself and Adult 1. Although the term was used because the text continued to refer to "plátano," the class had been informed that what was really being talked about was "banana." The life experiences of both Adult 1 and myself in this case proved to be an

authentic and more authoritative source for the initial language used in the formation of the concept about this crop.

The reference that I make in Utterance 24 to Los Angeles as a context for finding plátanos was directed at providing a destination for this food in its journey to us from Honduras. Adult 1 acknowledged in Utterance 25 that indeed plátanos could be procured in Los Angeles, but recontextualized the fruit even further by stating that they could be found locally as well. This was confirmed by me when referring to a local outlet referred to as Rancho Market which was familiar to both the children and adults in the class.

The succeeding lesson was on the cultivation, harvest, packing, shipping, warehousing, and selling of bananas, the various phases of production being familiar to many members of the class who were well acquainted with agricultural methods either in Mexico, Central America, or in "El Norte."

In Utterance 28, Child 1 ventriloquates quizzically by repeating, "In English?" upon my announcement that the class would be now reading the lesson in English.

I then ask the class to refer to their Spanish text as needed and indicates that I realized that many of the concepts being covered may be familiar to the adults, but they must defer to the children who have not developed the scope of these. Therefore, this reading would be more controlled due to the language and cognitive gap that the children would be experiencing, along with the language gap that

the parents were more subject to.

Child 3 expresses her attitude toward the upcoming lesson through her arm waving as a gesture of positive anticipation.

In Utterance 35, I begin mediating among adults and children regarding the concept of country, in the context of Honduras being a foreign country which exports bananas to the United States. I ask for an identification of this term.

(35) Child 4: "Corona."

(36) Teacher: "Is Corona a country?"

(37) Child 4: (with several other children chiming in)

"[Yes."

(38) Adult 4: "No, eets a ceety."

(39) Teacher: "Corona is a] city."

(40) Adult 4: (inaudible)..."a state."

(41) Child 4: "Like California."

(42) Teacher: "California is one of the states that make up the United States. En español, what's a country, somebody?"

(43) Adult 5: "Un país." (echoed by several adults, then children)

(44) Teacher: "Un país entero, que tiene muchos estados, como dicen los Estados Unidos de México o Los Estados Unidos Nortea

The dialogue of what is obvious to adults, even after



identifying the equivalent lexical item in the second language, is still a stretch for the children, as seen in Child 4's and others' claim that Corona is a country. While the children may be basing their judgment on the limited locale of a nation that they have not fully experienced, the adults are able to see the bigger picture even though may not have visited other parts of this country, but they have come from another country whereas the children, even though they may visit Mexico, still have not conceived of it as another nation.

In a sense, for the adults the smaller unit or part is contained within the next larger unit, that is, a city within a state, a state within a country and so on, whereas the children in their egocentric thought and language sense that the macrocosm is part of the microcosm, that is to say that the smaller unit is a representation of the whole, which can be restated in adult terms when referring to a city such as San Bernardino as a "typical all-American city." The teacher's role under these circumstances is to reconcile both of these points of view in a more global and unified perspective that bridges the cognitive gap while simultaneously allowing for transferring of concepts from the first to the second language.

In Utterance 43 some of this initial transference may be occurring in that not only the adults, but the children this time were responding to the question what a country is by shadowing the parents' response. The question here is, are they merely parroting the Spanish word for country, "país" or have they by mediating with



the teacher and parents, somehow modified their initial idiosyncratic concept. According to Ellis (1986), there may be a case for believing the latter in that they are producing prior to proficiency. This act of talking before knowing what they are saying as in toddling before walking or knowing where they are going most likely is producing microgenetic changes that over time will result in the formation of true socially constructed concepts as per Vygotsky and Bakhtin.

Similarly, I mediate between Adults 5 and 6 in Utterances 48-50. The reading resumes until the word "weather" is read in the context of the proper climate for growing bananas. I call for a definition.

(48) Adult 5: "Temperatura."

(49) Adult 6: "El tiempo."

(50) Teacher: "El tiempo. Sí. Uh huh. (then addressing Adult 5) La temperatura es parte de eso también. OK."

Adult 5 responds "La temperatura" to my question as to what is the Spanish term for weather. The element of temperature is validated as one component of the total weather, after Adult 6 gives the more encompassing answer of "El tiempo," just as Corona was seen as one part of the total country. In terms of the second language transference a further explanation was also required to clarify the second meaning of the term, which refers to chronological time.

Again in Utterances 55-57 the process of bridging between the

adults and children is seen in their successful renegotiation of meaning back from the second to the first language. My role as the teacher was to build the scaffolding under this bridge, that they are meeting upon.

(55) Adult 4: "Lots of sunshine in Spaneesh." (Several adults attempt to help their children and the word sun is heard repeated)

(56) Child 4: "Mucho sol."

(57) Teacher: "Yeah, mucho sol. (chuckling with the class, who are obviously enjoying the brainstorming together, then referring to a picture of a worker carrying a banana bunch on the next page) Does anyone remember how we say 'harvest' in Spanish? Harvest."

(58) Adult 4: "Harvest in Spaneesh." (addressing Child 4)

(59) Adult 5: "Ahm...cosecha."

(60) Teacher: "Cosecha OK...OK."

This bridge where the families join and crossover to each other's worlds, that is the adults to the childrens and the children to the adults' is seen most clearly in the efforts of Adult 4 in Utterances 57-60 to elicit a dialogue between Child 4 and myself. This bilingual brokering on the part of the parents in the world of academic Spanish and English is the reversal from the usual pattern of brokering that children are often required to do on behalf of their

parents in the world of everyday English.

This can be seen again in the next segment, Utterances 65-74, where the meaning is taken from one language to another as well as one mind frame to another.

The reading continues with an account of how pests such as bugs are controlled so as not to harm the crops of bananas. "Bugs" and "weeds" are then made the foci for adult language, along with child language and concept development. Both terms are requested by me to be stated in Spanish.

- (65) Child 3: "Insectos."  
(66) Teacher: "Insectos...and weeds?"  
(67) Adult 4: "Weeds." (other adults and children repeat the word as well while several parents consult with their children and vice-versa)  
(68) Teacher: "Weeds..."  
(69) Adult 5: "Silvestre."  
(70) Teacher: "Silvestre, sí...[¿como?"  
(71) Adult 4: (inaudible)..."molestan."  
(72) Teacher: "Sí, hierbas dañosos, ¿no?"  
(73) Adult 4: "Se molestan."  
(74) Adult 5: "Weeds."

This crossing over can be seen in Adult 4's identification of weeds as wild plants, after mutual consultation between adults and

children. I ask the adults to refine this a little further, mentioning the harmful factor, and Adult 4 comes up with plants that are bothersome as a definition for weeds.

So the distinctions between the qualities of wildness and harmfulness or bothersomeness are being developed as concepts associated with the common knowledge about weeds. The fact that some weeds such as dandelions may actually be beneficial in terms of having certain medicinal properties could have been another avenue for further more in-depth discussion.

In the next exchange, I begin by asking for the Spanish word for shoulder, taking the term from the text which referred to the shoulder pad that was worn by one of the workers who harvest bananas.

(77) Several adults

and children: "Hombro." (a child is heard saying "Shoulder.")

(78) Teacher: "Hombro...OK"

(79) Adult 3: "Pero, hombrera porque hombro para mi es de la misma [familia]"

(80) Teacher: "Hombreras uh huh...para proteger los plátanos..." (inaudible).]

(81) Adult 3: "Ah huh."

In Utterance 80, Adult 3 interjects that the words she feels better focusing on are shoulder pad. In this instance, she is

recontextualizing the discussion to the content of the text, rather than wishing to talk about the word shoulder in a decontextualized sense.

She mediates the discussion for herself and in so doing is demonstrating the multivoicedness of meaning, that is how thoughts that are inspired by concrete realities may be expressed in a way that at first becomes slightly disassociated with the original setting, and eventually get abstracted into a concept that takes on a life of its own, rather than a commonplace notion, that can be more easily thought about.

Thus, to create a greater zone of proximal development, the idea of what a shoulder, versus the simple identification of a shoulder pad, can become the basis for the invention of a machine with a pivoting and rotating motion. This type of abstraction that extracts components of the everyday and recombines them in a way that makes for a new synthesis within a different context. In this case, however, I conform with Adult 3's negotiated meaning, and do not develop this concept beyond the limits of the zone of proximal development at the stage that the class was ready for.

Going back to the the context of the processing of bananas, I ask the children to indicate what is the meaning for "ripen" in Utterances 88-93.

(88) Teacher: "How do you say ripen in Spanish?"

(89) Adult 3: "Se maduran, ¿no?"

- (90) Child 7: "I know."  
 (91) Adult 4: "Descomponer."  
 (92) Teacher: "Echase a perder [¿si maduran antes, no?"  
 (93) Adult 3: "Si maduran."]

Adult 3 correctly indicates maturation and Child 1 utters that she knows this. Next Adult 4 miscues by responding with the meaning of decomposition. Perhaps, the confusion involved the similar sounding words ripen and rotten that are associated with fruit.

The lesson then continues with me explaining the difference between the bridge of a ship and the a bridge that is found on land.

Another difficulty in identifying a lexical item that had been extracted from the reading was the difficulty in identifying the Spanish term for dock in Utterances 94-104.

- (94) Adult 4: "Dock." (upon hearing the word)  
 (95) Child 7: (jumping up) "I know!" (then quickly rolling her neck and head and sinking back down)  
 (96) Adult 5: "Grua."  
 (97) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"  
 (98) Adult 4: "Grua."  
 (99) Teacher: "No. Gruas son cranes ( reverting to English), esos son los cranes para levantar los contenedores."  
 (100) Adult 5: "Cra..."

- (101) Adult 4: "Esos de arriba , que no..."
- (102) Teacher: "Sí, uh huh, de arriba [para levantar"
- (103) Adult 4: "Para cualquier cosa."]
- (104) Teacher: "Se puede levantar esos contenedores del tren y meterlos allí en el barco."

Child 7 again indicates that she knows, but when called upon, quickly backs down. This casts doubt on her alleged knowledge of the meaning of ripen in the previous dialogue.

After the group misidentifies "gruas" or "cranes" for the word "dock" in Spanish, the term the Spanish word for it, " el dique," is then provided by me to close the language gap and the lesson continues. The association of a crane working on a dock to load and unload cargo was most likely the basis for this confusion. The word "el dique" had not been established as firmly in their memory in Spanish so as to carry over with the same ease to English as many of the other vocabulary words that we were reviewing.

The cognitive gap may still have been there for those who had no prior experience with or reading exposure to a dock. In essence, without the explanation for the purpose or context for having a dock, some individuals may have had the term in Spanish and in English and not understand what either is even though they are able to identify the correspondence between the same lexical item in two languages.

This is unfortunately, what passes for bilingualism in many instances where children are identified as being proficient in English



due their oral capabilities, and their assumed cognitive development in Spanish. The logic is how could they say it in English if they don't know it in Spanish. The reality may be that they don't really understand the concept in either language, even though they themselves may think that they do because of teachers who accept surface structure correctness such as phonics and syntax and don't probe into the deeper area of semantic content and pragmatic applications (Chomsky, 1965).

Nevertheless, the role of human imagination enters in here. It spans across time and can generate things that never existed, where a mental picture can be painted for another by way of words so as to almost have a person believe that they, for example are walking on a dock or on another planet. The lack of experience on a subject that children display does not stop them from being able to conceive of something such as a big-board-with-long legs-that-go-underwater-so-that it-does-not-float-away-when-you-walk-on-it, or for that matter, an orange-headed, pink-faced, green jumbybumble. Some sort of archetypal image is evoked in both the factual and fantasy based examples, images that are built on the framework of previous experience. So for adults as well as children, unknown concepts must have such a framework on which to hang nascent understanding. Part of the creation of this particular zone of proximal development involved this strategy.

Child 4 is drawn in to the next dialogue with the encouragement of Adult 4 in Utterance 105.



In studying the transportation of the bananas once they have been shipped from overseas, I ask for someone to tell me what a truck trailer is.

- (105) Adult 4: "Right heer." (pointing to Child 4, whom teacher then calls on)
- (106) Child 4: "A car...it's like a car, but a big one."
- (107) Teacher: "What do they call something that's bigger than a car?" (calling on Child 5)
- (108) Child 5: "A diesel."
- (109) Teacher: "Yeah...it runs on diesel...It's a diesel what? Somebody?..."
- (110) Child 3: "Trailer."
- (111) Teacher: "Trail...OK It's a trailer truck. In español, how do you say it?"
- (112) Adults 5 and 4,  
and Child 3: "Trailer." (pronounced "tryler")
- (113) Teacher: "Trailer o camión de carga."
- (114) Several  
adults: "Uh huh."

This child is on the right track when indicating that a truck trailer is something bigger than a car. Child 5 then brings in another piece to the puzzle with the term diesel in Utterance 105. I recognize that these children have chunked many related items together, and

call on the adults for their input. Adults 5 and 4 utter “trailer” (pronounced tryler in Spanish), which I then pick up on, noting for the class the pronunciation difference but the same graphemic representation. Then I add the term “camión de cargo” as a variant to this concept.

The specific context for intermingling of child and adult speech that I orchestrated in Utterances 105-114 is an example of the heterogeneity of voices, through which various levels of understanding interplay to produce microgenetic changes over time in an ever expanding zone of proximal development.

This speaks to an ethos and an aesthetic unfolding that goes beyond the simple apparent child oriented nature of the textbook. In this sense it may be a matter of not only getting but of giving meaning to these readings which are really frozen thoughts of other people that have framed the means for conducting a more expansive conversation on the topics presented, through socially constructed introspection in thought and expression through language.

In the interlude between Utterances 114 and 115, I remind the group and myself that everyone is supporting each other in this multivoicedness of meaning that is being produced by the interactions of parents with their children, parents with me, parents with other parents, parents with other children, children with me, children with other children, and me with the whole group of parents and children.

The map reading that follows traces the bananas’ route from

Honduras to California is a foreshadowing of another map activity that will be recapitulated later in the lesson. The group of families will then be put in relation to the bananas that have travelled so far and that perhaps, without this study or reflection would not be so appreciated. I next ask for the Spanish term for "unload."

(115) Several

adults: "Descargar."

(116) Teacher: "Descargar, OK."

Reading continues and I pick the word "warehouses" from the text and ask for the equivalent term in Spanish.

(117) Adult 5: "Bodegas."

(118) Adult 4: "Bodegas."

(119) Teacher: "Sí, depositos de alimentos, bodegas digamos."

Reading resumes and the term "ripening room" is encountered. Again, I check for understanding.

(120) Adult 5: "Maduración."

(121) Teacher: "Maduración, cuartos de maduración. OK, they control the temperature...temperature control, all right."

Reading resumes and then I ask why these rooms need to be warm and wet.

(122) Adult 4: "That's the kind of weather thee bananas need."

(123) Teacher: "That's the kind of weather that they had in...in Honduras, right?"

(124) Adult 4: "Yeah."

(125) Teacher: "Humid hot weather...except they were cold when they were in the trucks and in the boat. They kept the temperatuere cool so they wouldn't ripen. Now they want them to ripen."

Reading resumes until I ask for identification of the next word associated with the bananas' journey.

(126) Teacher: "Who are storekeepers?... anyone, somebody?"

(127) Adult 5 : "Comerciantes."

(128) Teacher: "Los comerciantes, uh huh. OK now, so the people from all the major distributors that buy for Stater Brothers, and then Vons and Ralphs, Luckys, everybody"[...

(129) Child 4: "Food 4 Less?"  
] "yeah all of them, Food for Less, gets their wholesale... they buy their wholesale ¿como se dice...por mayoría?"

(130) Several adults: "Mayoreo."

(131) Teacher: "Mayoreo, and then they sell it retail, ¿como se dice retail?"

(132) Several adults: "Menudeo."

(133) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"

(134) Several adults: "Menudeo."

(135) Teacher: "A nosotros, ¿no?"

(136) Adult 3: "Sí, a nosotros se venden por menudeo y ellos  
por mayoreo compran."

(137) Teacher: "OK".

Reading resumes and the last term that I ask to be identified  
is clerk.

(138) Adult 5: "Cajero."

(139) Teacher: "Cajero, the cashier...OK."

In discussing the the vendors that we know as supermarkets in Utterances 127-130, the situation for bananas that the group, especially the children, are familiar with is finally reached. In recontextualizing the language of Social Studies on the subject of this common table fruit through this academic activity, the interdependence of all persons along the chain of production, transportation, and sales is made clear in all of their situatedness.

In the midst of my naming of some of the major supermarket chains, Child 4, in Utterance 130, wants to know if Food 4 Less, the closest store to the families involved in this study, is included in this whole cycle of supply and demand. I confirm that this store is part of the same system and that they get their bananas in the same way. The connection for the participants, especially the children, has come full circle.

I demonstrate the necessity for interconnectedness in the multivoicedness of meaning in Utterances 129-138 by having the thought for, but not producing the correct Spanish for wholesale,

thereupon, asking the adults to remind me of the Spanish terms for wholesale and retail, which they do.

The interrelatedness of the heterogeneity of voices is further demonstrated in the next segment of the lesson. I begin a stream of recalling of persons involved in bringing bananas to the local stores. by asking for the names of some of the workers who are involved in the production of bananas.

(140) Adult 3: "The farmers."

(141) Teacher: "The farmers. OK, and then what? When it's time for the harvest...there are two guys..."

(142) Adult 4: "Two guys, yeah."

(143) Teacher: "One guy does what?"

(144) Adult 5 and  
some other adults: "One cuts them."

(145) Teacher: "One guy cuts them, con un machete, ¿no?...and the other one?"

(146) Several  
adults: "Carries them...(with Adult 4 dominating now)  
carries on shoulders (with an accent) all the  
way to the uh..."

(147) Adult 5: "Wire cable."

(148) Teacher: "To the... he puts it on a hook on a wire cable  
and it just takes it goes automaticamente to the,  
uh processing plant como equipos trabajando de

- dos personas."
- (149) Adult 4: "And then goes to [the packers."
- (150) Adult 3: "A los empacadores.]"
- (151) Teacher: "And then from there it (referring to the banana bunch) goes to packing...after they clean it ... right."
- (152) Adult 5: "They wash them and they dry them."
- (153) Teacher: "They wash them and dry them and weigh them and then...they put them in boxes and..."
- (154) Adult 3: "In con-containers."
- (155) Teacher: "OK, Once they put them in the boxes what is the next thing that they have to do?"
- (156) Adult 4: "They put them in containers."
- (157) Teacher: "They put the boxes in containers...and where do they put the containers?"
- (158) Child 8: "On a train."

I string a frame of utterances, but stop short of completing these, hoping that my voice is now implanted in the minds of the the participants from whom I elicit evidence through drawing out their speech to finish my thoughts. The picture is one of a very controlled zone of proximal development that uses spoken context clues to offer cues for emerging second language discourse.

This method of prompting responses begins with a retracing of the sequence of workers beginning with the farmer in Utterance 140 by Adult 3. This back and forth shadowing of my utterances by the



students continues with me anticipating hearing my thoughts reiterated by the voices of the students' whose minds are now part of mine as mine has become part of theirs. This segment of filling up of the zone of proximal development and expanding its limits continues from Utterances 140-201.

In Utterance 142, Adult 4 recalls the reading and agrees with my statement that teams of two workers are involved in the harvest. This triggers me to ask what each of them is responsible for. In turn a dialogue is established that draws specific responses from the class concerning the concepts and vocabulary that had been presented, this second time in the second language. At times the thoughts are expressed in English as in Utterance 147 by Adult 5, but I respond in English and then in Spanish, such as in Utterance 148 as a code switching strategy to enhance concept formation and retention. This also reinforces the value of the Spanish language as being on an equal footing with English, and not an impediment that must be overcome in the struggle to become fluent in English.

This ambience of acceptance and promotion of a balanced bilingual discourse is further seen in Utterances 149-150, where Adult 3 echoes in Spanish, Adult 4's response in English. Then in Utterance 154, Adult 3, repeats the first syllable and then correctly states the word "containers."

I reiterate this procedure of packing and loading, then asks in Utterance 157, what is the procedure in the sequence of events involved with "The Banana Bunch." Child 8 completes the uptake of



this segment with Utterance 158 where the next step of putting the containers on a train is told by him.

I keep up the flow of interaction by asking where the train goes in Utterance 159, while Adult 4 continues to broker for Child 4, as seen in Utterance 160.

(159) Teacher: "On the train. OK, and then where does the train go?"

(160) Adult 4: (addresssing Child 4) "Where does the train go?"

(161) Teacher: "Where does the train go?"

(162) Adult 5: "To the..."

I then call on Child 7 but she does not respond.

(163) Teacher: "It has to go...it has to go someplace to unload..."

Children and parents are considering the question.

(164) Adult 4: (inaudible) "land...to the seaport."

(165) Adults 3

and 4: "To the seaport."

(166) Teacher: "To the seaport. And once it gets to the seaport, they have a giant what?"

(167) Child 1: "Crane." (echoed by several children)

When Child 4 does not come up with a response, Adult 4 ponders further until correctly, though hesitatingly, saying "seaport" in Utterance 164, and immediately receiving support from Adult 3, they jointly repeat this in Utterance 165. The chorus of these two

parent voices, with its accompanying crossover of meaning and language to the rest of the group was an outcome that I had engineered for in planning and designing this lesson.

The transference of cognition from teacher to student and from student to student, in this case two adults, exemplifies again the heterogeneity of voices that establish meaning in a collaborative manner. Child 1 gets involved in Utterance 167, after I want to know the next step. Several other children also chime in, signifying their accord with Child 1. This uptake by Child 1 puts me in the role of pretending not to know a piece of information, that Child 1 eagerly supplies, thus “becoming the teacher”, in this instance.

This momentary role reversal allows the students to feel empowered in that they were supplying the most important element of the discourse to form the various utterances that had been scaffolded by me. The loop was begun by me but the circuit of each utterance had to be completed by members of the group, in order to make the thoughts and language that was occurring become voices in their own minds. Thus, my outer speech became the inner speech of the students, who in turn expressed this outwardly in microgenetic steps to complete the chain of socially mediated speech that was operating in this zone of proximal development.

The recontextualizing of academic language in this area of Social Studies for the parents so that they might better understand their childrens literacy requirement, was being carried out in this systematic yet open format that allowed the schema of each learner

to act upon the concepts that were presented so that they could be reinterpreted in a way that would personalize their significance. This was done within the context of shared meaning that the whole group was deriving from their exposure to the lessons.

After dialoguing with several parents and children on the progression of the bananas' journey, I indicate that their destination is reached when they arrive at the local stores and are purchased, in Utterance 192. This fact is echoed by several adults in Utterance 193, "We buy them." I close this segment in Utterance 194 by saying, "OK. Good." This is answered by a feedback comment from Adult 4, "Not bad," seeming pleased with this walk-through of the important points that had just occurred.

At this point in the lesson, the emphasis shifted to written as well as verbal skills, with the focus remaining that of exposing the parents to the requirements of formalized academic learning that their children must deal with. Simple response questions framed the responses that were generated by the class.

These utterances were reformulated by me into suitable succinct sentences that may be viewed as another contextualizing of the recontextualized concepts that had been discussed during the oral portion of the lesson. These written exercises now had a baseline for reference, rather than being approached without preparation, in a decontextualized prescriptive grammar based approach to literacy.

The written part asked the students to name two new things that they had learned during the lesson on bananas. I ask for

responses, calling on Adult 5.

- (202) Adult 5: "Que vienen de bien lejos."  
(203) Teacher: "Que...que vienen de bien lejos."  
(204) Adult 5: "Que vienen de otro país."  
(205) Teacher: "Vamos a poner ésto para...para que yo sé que muchas personas ya saben ciertas cosas, pero otras no, entonces para...para ayudar a los niños...voy a escribir ésto en el pizarrón porque es una práctica para ellos, para (inaudible) muchos de ellos no saben ésto tampoco, pero ustedes pueden ayudar a ellos para copiar lo que yo estoy escribiendo."

I then ask Adult 5 to dictate as I writes on the board: "Los platanos vienen de lejos."

- (206) Teacher: (after finishing) "OK. Así está bien porque a veces los niños no saben y creen que crecen allí no más en el Food 4 Less." (laughter)

Adult 1 responds to the first question that asked the students to identify one new thing that they learned during the lesson. She indicated that the fact that bananas come from another country was new knowledge to her. It is doubtful that this was the case if she were speaking solely for herself, since she originated from Honduras, the country that was identified in the lesson as a major producer of

bananas.

In a previous conversation with Adult 1, however, she indicated that Child 1 had never been to Honduras, and had not been motivated to go there, having become somewhat "Americanized." Perhaps through the experience of traveling there vicariously in the lesson jointly with the child, she was ventriloquating his thoughts at the discovery that bananas are not produced locally, as I had remarked jokingly to the adults in Utterance 206, in places such as Food 4 Less, while intending the comment to be taken seriously by the children.

After working together to complete their written version of the response that had been chosen by consensus, I then asked for a child to tell the group something new that he or she had learned.

- (207) Child 8: "Que viajan en trailer."  
(208) Teacher: "Oh, sí...¿que vamos a poner?...los platanos..."  
(209) Adult 1: "Viajan mucho."  
(210) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"  
(211) Adult 1: "Viajan mucho."  
(212) Teacher: "Viajan mucho, pero no solamente en los trailers...en un tren, un barco, un trailer y despues otros...otros...otros camiones, entonces vemos... los plátanos viajan mucho...¿podemos poner?"  
(213) Adult 4: "Yeah."

In Utterance 207, Child 8 responded that he had not previously known that bananas travel in trailer trucks. To generalize this concept I ask if anyone else would like to expand on Child 8's statement. Adult 1 joins in again, contributing the more generalized response that was being sought, that bananas travel a lot, this covering not only the trailer trucks, but the train, the boat, and all the other movements that they undergo after being picked. I then write this modified version of Child 8's response on the board.

This collaborative effort among teacher, children, and parents produced a re-decontextualized concept that progressed from the concrete circumstances or recontextualized language back to the academic more abstract forms of oral, textual, and written discourse in Spanish and English. Yet, all of the concrete circumstances that accompanied the the most general statement that "Bananas travel a lot," were still associated and embedded in that refined statement, as opposed to attempting to arrive at such a generalization in a decontextualized lesson that was not sensitive to the background knowledge and attitudes that the learners and the teacher brought together to the learning situation.

The social nature of language, with which the adult helps construct significance with the child is confirmed in Adult 4's affirming response in Utterance 213, to the reinterpretation in Utterance 212, that I gave to the Child 8's original utterance.

The finalized written version went through several variations through thought and language before being approved by the class in

its most simple and yet most abstract form, with no explicit reference to the means of transportation in the oral or written expressions, those being left to the implicit mental worlds of the conversants or readers to fill in the details based on subjective though archetypal images of trains, trailer trucks, ships, et al.

After the Spanish writing activity, the parallel English activity was given, however in a more controlled fashion, with me translating the above two new facts that had been learned, and modeling the prescribed grammatical spoken and written forms.

(214) Teacher: "OK. Let's look at the paper that I just gave everybody...We're going to write the same two things we wrote here except I'm going to write them in English this time...so just look up here and watch what I'm writing ...Number one again is 'Los plátanos vienen de lejos'...'The"

(215) Adult 5: "The bananas."

(216) Teacher: "Wait. The bananas? But in English you don't say the, you don't need the article. You're just going to say..."

(217) Adult 5: "Bananas."

(218) Teacher: "Bananas come..."(writing)

(219) Adult 5: "Bananas."

(220) Teacher: "Bananas come..."

(221) Adult 5: "Number one." (pointing out the place to child

5)

(222) Adult 4: "Far away."

(223) Teacher: "From far away (listening to adult 4) OK? And  
on number two, Los platanos viajan mucho.  
We're going to put again... Bananas..."

(224) Adult 6: "Travel."

(225) Teacher: "How do you say viajan?"

(226) Adult 6: "Travel."

(227) Teacher: "Travel...mucho."

(228) Adult 6: "A lot."

(229) Teacher: "A lot."

I began this written activity by reflecting out loud about the literal translation of the statement, "Los plátanos vienen de lejos," in Utterance 214, "The...," then pausing and realizing that the article should not be used in English when referring to bananas as a general class, only if referring to a particular grouping from among that class, "Bananas travel far," as opposed to "The bananas travel far.")

I am enthusiastically interrupted, though, by Adult 5 who continues, "The bananas..." in Utterance 215. I must stop her at this point since the above mentioned syntactic and semantic point that I had stopped to consider after saying the English definite article, in the literal reading of the statement, needed to be explained to the class. Adult 5 quickly restarts the translation, dictating the prescribed way in Utterance 217.

A multivoicedness of meaning occurs here where the



descriptive grammar of the learner and the prescriptive grammar of the teacher are coordinated as ideas and emerge in Utterances 218-229. The comingling of childrens and adults thoughts that brings about a shared consciousness is seen in the intentionality that Adult 5 shows in pointing out the place to Child 5 in Utterance 221, filtering down the invitation from me as the teacher to occupy the same sociolinguistic space by a ventriloquated heterogeneity of voices that would intermingle the child's thoughts and those of herself as the adult model to bring about microgenetic changes mediated in the context of this lesson.

Throughout this lesson, various curriculum strands within Social Studies, such as cultural, economic literacy and geographic literacy, were highlighted and recontextualized from their academic formal language for the parents as part of the required curriculum that the Corona-Norco Unified School District outlines in its designated "Essential Learnings."

Other lessons, with brief examples following, covered several different strands as well, some of these often intertwining, including historical literacy, ethical literacy, and sociopolitical literacy by using meaningful content relevant to the world of these parents to assist them in becoming aware and accustomed to their childrens world of school and its formal registers of discourse in Spanish as well as English.

Transcript 2- February 11, 1993:

## "The Banana Plant" & Discourse Analysis

Continuing on the topic of bananas was the focus for more oral, reading, and written activities during this lesson.

- (1) Teacher: "Buenas noches. Pues, como la vez pasada estabamos platicando sobre los plátanos, ¿no? vamos a dar un repaso para las personas que no estaban para entender algo del tema, ¿no?. Entonces, abran los libros (Child 2 lifts up and shakes both arms excitedly) por favor a la página...creo que es...la página 34, como el canal."
- (2) Teacher: (referring to diagrams of the banana plant at the bottom of the page) "Allí están otra vez los diagramas. Por eso son útiles porque a veces uno no puede entender...como cuando esta leyendo una cosa, y con el dibujo puede ver bien claramente cómo es la cosa, ¿no? Por eso los diagramas son bien importantes en los estudios y también en los trabajos. Hasta el gobierno usa diagramas para sus presentaciones...de estadísticos y todo...Entonces, miren la diferencia. Éste

árbol...tiene madera, ¿no? Parece un roble o un... un árbol bien grande. Éste es la diferencia entre la planta de plátanos y un árbol...porque no se puede cortar madera del tronco de la planta de plátanos, ni si quiera para hacer muebles o para construir casas o nada así...pero las hojas sí. (referring to thatched roofs)...Y se puede usar por ejemplo en Centroamérica...en el estilo de tamales que se usan, ¿no?"

(3) Adult 1: "Es de hojas de pla...de banana."

(4) Teacher: "Hojas..."

(5) Child 2: "Para hacer tamales."

(6) Teacher: "Uh huh..."

(7) Child 2: "Tamales lejos." (upon his miscue, laughter by mother and several adults as well as Child 2 as his mother gently chides by stroking and pushing his head)

(8) Adult 1: "Tamaleros." (echoed orally by several other adults who concur with this pronunciation by knodding their heads)

At this point I indicate that I am going to pass out some worksheets for a followup written activity to the previous week's lesson.

(9) Child 2: "¿Se llaman...?"(with one hand on forehead appearing embarrassed and the other stretched

out inquiringly)

- (10) Adult 1: "Sí, así se llaman, tamaleros, pero no tengas pena." (several other adults smiling and nodding encouragingly at Child 2)

At the beginning of this lesson Child 2 expresses enthusiasm for the evening's study by waving his arms about like a championship fighter. This particular child is enrolled in my 2nd grade class and has made substantial progress in primary language reading since the beginning of this academic year. He started out as basically a non-reader and now is approaching grade level proficiency. It appears that he relishes his success and revels in the challenge of progressing even further.

I have a little trouble remembering the page where we left off last in the last lesson, but when noting that it is page 34, a chord is struck with the class by referring to the Spanish language television channel that members of the class are accustomed to viewing. (One of the adults had previously criticized a few irregular attendees for being more dedicated to their "telenovelas" than to coming to the class.)

In Utterance 2, I mention the importance of pictorial diagrams in both the academic and work settings. In doing this, there was a connection made between the child's world of schoolbooks and the practical adult world of employment, where written plans and diagrams must be followed in many instances. The usefulness of wood in occupations, such as construction and furniture

manufacturing, associated with the socioeconomic status of the adults in the class was a sub-theme I accessed, aside from the appeal of bananas to children that was the text's main motivation for focus on this topic.

The uniqueness and richness of experience among class members and myself with regard to banana leaves was brought out in the segment beginning with the last sentence of Utterance 2, and picked up by Adult 1 in Utterance 3. There is still hesitation to use the term "plátano" from the textbook, and the proper term, "banana" is used instead.

In Utterance 5, Child 2 interjects his own experience by saying what his inner speech is telling him what the banana leaves are used for: "To make tamales." He displays pride in his awareness and the forthcoming acknowledgement by me in Utterance 6. However, in Utterance 7 Child 2 reveals a pattern of egocentric speech by saying "tamale lejos" for "tamaleros" (tamale makers).

This child appears taken aback for a moment after miscuing and drawing good natured laughter and a mock chide from his mother, but a bridging between this idiosyncratic speech of the child and the outer speech of socialized communication is made by Adult 1 who interprets this multivoicedness of meaning and models the accepted pronunciation. Child 2 then quickly recovers from any embarrassment, and overcoming any lingering self-doubt, asks Adult 1 to repeat the correct pronunciation, which she does in Utterance 10, adding that the child should not feel self-conscious at all, this

being affirmed also by several other adults who demonstrate support for Child 2's undaunted efforts at expressing what he has internalized.

And so this child is reinforced in his initial enthusiastic approach to the lesson, as can be observed in his next action, anxiously and repeatedly asking his mother for a pencil.

Transcript 3- February, 18, 1993:

"Depending on Others"

& Discourse Analysis

After having studied how we depend on others for such commodities as bananas, this lesson developed the theme of how others depend on us.

- (1) Teacher: "La vez pasada estabamos hablando...ah de como dependemos de otras...otras personas. Ahora vamos a ver como otros dependen de nosotros... Ah...el título de "Los trabajadores de alimentación, como hemos platicado sobre los agricultores...como vimos sobre un agricultor en el estado de Alabama, un agricultor de cacahuates y tambien vimos como se producen los platános en Centroamérica y como llevan en el tren, después en barco y

después en trailers a todos partes de los Estados Unidos. Ahora (referring to book) vamos a ver lo que está pasando en este dibujo. Parece que la señora está pagando a la cajera y la niña, vamos a ver...que esta haciendo..."

- (2) Adult 1: "Está pagando."
- (3) Teacher: "¿Está pagando a la cajera?"
- (4) Several adults: "Sí."
- (5) Teacher: "Y la niña al lado de ella parece que está pensando algo, ¿no?"
- (6) Adult 1: "Está pensando quizás lo que ya cobraron."  
(laughter among adults)
- (7) Teacher: "A ver... ¡El susto!"
- (8) Adult 1: (with other adults echoing in muttering tones)  
"!El susto!"
- (9) Teacher: "Está acostumbrandose a la vida." (continued laughter)

I then begin the formal lesson, "How Others Depend on Us," by asking the parents to assist their children in reading or following along in the text. According to their literacy development, each of the children and adults then read or hear at least the expression of ideas regarding this theme.

In Utterance 1, I recap the course of study so far, that is how the group has been examining the dependence that we have on others, specifically as consumers of food products in an urban

society. The focus then turns to how the agricultural and transportation workers need consumers to continue the cycle of production. Thus the interdependence of people on others is firmly established. I indicate that parents, besides providing certain benefits to their children, also rely on them to do certain things in the context of the family in a give-and-take coordinated effort at life.

When referring to the illustration of the girl in the text, that showed a surprised look, Adult 1 immediately voices her opinion of the child's thoughts in Utterance 6. It is that she is thinking of how expensive everything is. Several of the adults express their agreement with Adult 1. I do not dwell on other possible thoughts that might be in the mind of the child depicted, such as "How did all this stuff get here?" or "What a big place this is!"

However, in deference to this adult, I close ranks with the other parents and reemphasizes the comment of Adult 1, by rephrasing the utterance and saying, "The shock!" which is ventriloquated by Adult 1 and several other adults. After receiving this feedback, I give further support to the adults and a hint to the children as to the nature of the real world by saying, "She's getting used to life."

Transcript 4- March 4, 1993:

"Families and Ancestors"  
& Discourse Analysis



The context of the family as the main example for developing the concept of how others depend on us was the focus of the prior lesson. Strands of ethical and sociopolitical literacies had been covered as part of the Social Studies curriculum. To extend this into an historical literacy, the topic of families and ancestors was now introduced.

- (1) Teacher: "Como dijimos que cada de nosotros, cada quien tiene sus antepasados, se puede ver otra vez...ah, (referring to diagram in book) hay una niña aquí sentado tocando el piano. Y ahí puede ver la historia de su familia, ¿no? La mamá está ahí arriba y ella esta dibujando ahí ¿no?...Y el papá está cocinando ¿no? Entonces cada de los padres tienen sus padres también...Bueno...y el papá del papá, tocando el piano...Como, por eso la nina le gusta tocar el piano también porque eso viene del lado del papá, el papá del papá. Entonces por eso es importantae para reconocer nuestros antepasados porque no solamente el color del pelo, o la altura y todas de las caracteristias físicas vienen de nuestras familias, pero también el carácter, las inclinaciones, y los talentos y todo eso...también vienen de las familias.

In analyzing my presentation of how everyone needs to consider who they are in relation to their forbearers, the historical, cultural, and institutional forces formulated by Wertsch are brought to bear in the lecture and the subsequent discussion.

The recognition of a family tree brings out the historical connection with the grandparents and their contributions to the identity of the children. An example of a cultural context for a family to live within is shown in the example of the father doing the cooking and the mother working as an artist, a role modification in the institution of traditional families, and in particular, Hispanoamericano families where the kitchen is usually considered the woman's domain. All three components of mediated action are involved in this instance that shows how intertwined the relationship among them is.

The very nature of an institution, such as "the family" may be changed according to culturally mediated actions, as in the situation where the preparation of food is done by the man rather than the woman, who is portrayed as doing work in the "outside world." The families who participated in this class are in a process, to one extent or another, of adaptation to the culture of this country at large .

The retention of respect for the values of their ancestors, "los viejitos," and the continuity of the family would appear to be being mediated or renegotiated in terms of the opportunities that are available for women in this society. The Hispanoamericano children in this class, and many others like them, are being influenced by

both their home and school environments as well as the mass culture, and so are thrust into this dialectic process of synthesising the elements that will best help them to survive and hopefully thrive.

All of these mediating forces that affect cognition were at play in this intergenerational zone of proximal development, where thought and language based on new and old knowledge, were voicing values that developed out of responses to the topics and issues being dialogued.

## INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Two perspectives must be taken when judging whether this project found the result that it had set out to. The research question was, "How can family instruction in the curriculum content area of Social Studies be developed by way of the mediated actions of a teacher, parents, and their children in both the primary and second languages?"

The research question was answered by the design and implementation of a collaborative parent/child study module that involved Hispanoamericano parents in a meaningful way in the academic life of their children.

Based upon the dialogic exchanges that were mediated among the parents, the children, and me, it becomes evident that this exploratory model of family literacy succeeded in recontextualizing the academic language of Social Studies for Hispanoamericano parents in order to assist them in understanding the literacy requirements of their children. Thus, the immediate goal of this project was achieved. In this sense, the project was a success.

On the other hand, in terms of having a long term or lasting beneficial effect, the motivation and constancy toward this pursuit of helping their childrens "desarrollo" or unfolding development on the part of these parents will be critical. This reflects student qualities that are brought to the classroom, per the Contextual Interaction Model. Also crucial will be the sensitivity and support of other

educators that these families will encounter throughout their childrens academic program. This again reflects the Contextual Interaction Model, where educational input factors and instructional elements play an important part in affecting student outcomes. In any case, the ongoing literacy needs of the parents as well as their children will continue to be essential for enabling the mastery of the type of specialized academic language that is necessary for Hispanoamericano and all children to function and flourish in the school environment and beyond.

While working alongside their children in an academic setting, the parents involved in this project were given an opportunity to share in development of oral and literacy skills in their primary and second languages, with the aim of better equipping themselves to aid their children in their academic work and allowing the children to appreciate the efforts of their parents so as to bring families closer over time.

The fact that members of the class were able to respond in varying degrees in either Spanish or English to my utterances was an important part of this project, that is, to establish and carry on a dialogue on academic subject matter through a style of conversation that families would be willing to enter into with me, reciprocally with other parents and children, and mutually with their own children.

The bilingual sociolinguistic mode of this project was meant to foster empowerment in the families who participated by making

them feel more at ease, and therefore better able to succeed by drawing on their cognitive and affective affinities in Spanish to approach new concepts and to work on its linguistic recasting into English.

The objective of every lesson was to take the students as far as possible in their comprehension of the concepts involved. A crossover of consciousness as expressed in words was my cue that the boundaries of the targeted zone of proximal development were appropriate or needed to be adjusted, as in the case where no one in the class was able to identify the word for "dock" in Spanish.

To further illustrate the dynamics of this zone, the exchange between Adult 1 and me, on the difference between plátanos and bananas, might be seen as a wandering off the subject presented by the text. Or it could be viewed as an exploration of the very subject that the text was attempting to focus on. The correct identification, from the outset, of what the class was going to talk about was thus essential for the lesson that followed. This straying off the main point by questioning the validity of the text's choice of words was like the example of the rock thrown in the pond, which opened up the zone of proximal development for ownership of concepts that would be developed (see Figure 3).

Furthermore, the zone was not imposed from without, rather, the ripples from Adult 1's questioning showed a metacognitive intentional approach to learning, which I utilized, rather than attempted to suppress. This was only possible because I also knew

the difference between plantains and bananas, having the cultural background to distinguish them and appreciate the point that Adult 1 was making.

All during this dialogue, and the others that transpired throughout this class, the children were hearing the voices of their parents in a way that they may never have heard before and intermingling their thoughts with those of the adults. The discourse among the parents, the children, and me allowed for movement from context embedded and cognitively undemanding conversation about how the children liked bananas to context reduced yet cognitively undemanding tasks such as the printing the date correctly.

As the zone of proximal development was pushed further, context embedded cognitively demanding functions such as the expression of understanding of new concepts came into play. This could be seen in the case of Child 8 who began expressing his new knowledge that bananas travel in trailer trucks. This point was learned in a context-specific or embedded manner. The last phase of this learning continuum, that of context reduced cognitively demanding skills was opened up when I then asked for the most concise linguistic expression to convey what had been learned. This was arrived at with the help of Adult 1 in the refining of the concept to the more generalized statement that bananas travel a lot. Thus the child's simple idea was further mediated by a parent into this more succinct concept at the end of the dialogic exchange. This brought Child 8's original concrete idea into the stream of a more

abstract representation that is characteristic of academic learning.

The meanings of concepts in various strands of Social Studies were developed in this study as they played off of each other in two languages. Moreover, they went back and forth among children and parents in a multiplicity of voices striving for a common meaning, as with an orchestra. I acted, as would a conductor, to help mediate a growth of Hispanoamericano parents' awareness concerning the requirements and expectations that are involved in the formal educational process of their children.

In dialoguing with parents and their children in a heterogeneity of voices, some more vocal than others, it was evident that the basis for the negotiated multivoicedness of meaning sprang from all of the collective voices making up each individual's personal history. Throughout this whole process, the role of the the teacher was to help create a zone of proximal development that helped bridge between what the students knew and how they would express it.

And this is what occurred, even among those who may have been silent in their language, but active in their participation through their presence. They resonated with the more outspoken during these dialogues. The outer voices went inward and in time will become expressed outwardly as reverberations of the original hearings.

The coming together in this project of the participants and what took place between the representatives of the home, the



parents, and the representative of the school, myself, as the teacher, was a playing out on a small scale of the Contextual Interaction Model, with the eventual outcome of the childrens education and place in society hanging in the balance. The cultural and institutional forces that influence the operation of mediated actions over historical time were also present throughout this project.

The cross-cultural tension between the dynamic of family responsibility that has become commonly perceived as a characteristic value that has been sustained among Hispanoamericanos and the myth of a monopoly on personal resourcefulness (based on exploitation of caste-like minorities) that Caucasio-Anglos exhibit remains an underlying issue that merits thorough examination.

The value of formal education remains an issue with many caste-like minority groups, such as Hispanoamericanos. Many members of these groups consciously or unconsciously understand that schools prepare most of the children in this society to be associates of the status quo, perpetrators of business as usual, as transitioned, assimilated voices of the establishment, that straddle or leave behind the values that most Hispanoamericano families try to preserve, or at least hold as an ideal, especially simple unity as opposed to fragmentation of families, which success in the complex American society often brings as the downside to personal achievement.

Hence, even when opportunities are presented for growth and

advancement, these may not be encouraged or taken when the price is cultural disloyalty. Somehow, this sense of disillusionment and alienation must also be mediated by Hispanoamericano parents for the benefit of their children, so that they might have a freedom to decide what is good from both the culture of their home and neighborhood and that of the community and greater society in which they find themselves.

The fear of that knowledge of "foreign" ways will bring rejection of their ways by their children is real in the minds of many Hispanoamericano parents, but to judge critically that which is beneficial and that which is subversive to their culture is the great need among many families. Many of these parents are cut off from what goes on inside the classroom after the door is closed, and a few years later, find out that they have lost their children to another world that they cannot reach.

My role in this project as the teacher was to help create a zone of mediated action to bridge across the contexts of the home and the school for the purpose of allowing Hispanoamericano parents to not be intimidated by their childrens everyday context, but to relate it to their own lives and thereby empower these families by valuing joint study as not just a means for helping these children survive the schooling regimen, but as a way of inculcating a love of lifelong learning that would enable adults and children to thrive in the context of academic learning. This was the principal goal of the project, with this objective being carried out in that the parents

actually worked on the lessons that their children needed to do as part of their formalized studies.

The assumption upon which this project rested was that Hispanoamericano parents would respond to and take an active part in the educational issues facing their children. It is clear that this was borne out in the level of interest and participation that took place. Quite a few parents with children in the second grade as well as other grades had requested to take part in this study, however due to constraints of time and the exploratory nature of this project, it was required to exclude them.

Notwithstanding this shortcoming, along with the fact that the impact on those families that did participate could not be adequately measured in the short time frame involved, there was a contextual void that was filled between the school and the homes of Hispanoamericano families that would validate further long term investigations into this phenomenon of collaborative family study groups.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project demonstrates that parents will take the initiative and participate in support and self-help study groups. Followup home visits may be in order for teasing out a more personal perspective from the parents regarding their before and after attitudes about becoming more familiarized with their childrens

education. Apart from a check on consciousness raising, a survey might also be done on the time commitment that these parents report to working with their children on academic assignments after receiving this exposure.

Based upon this response, the School District might consider establishing an apparatus for assisting parents district-wide. This might include bilingual literacy classes, offered at the school site, where the parents would be able to develop their own abilities while studying content area material that is highly correlated with their childrens texts, adapting the teaching strategies to the learning styles and literacy levels of the adults.

The networking of parents with each other, perhaps by grade level, to form ongoing home study groups could also possibly result from the module described in this project.

A dual purposed and simultaneously executed approach would entail the parents becoming students learning to teach, while concurrently, teaching their children and learning themselves in the process. Not only cognitive concepts through content areas of the curriculum and primary and secondary language development would be involved in this effort, but skill development on how best to work with their children to provide help in their studies.

At best, a model program would also tap the whole family as a resource in a community based empowering of Hispanoamericanos. This would extend into utilizing older siblings and their peers, from high school level and up, as another way of mediating between the

home and the early school formation of K-3 children, as cross-age mentors who have been through the educational system and can offer their advice and counsel on the road that lies ahead.

Hispanoamericano leaders from spheres other than education could also be called upon to take a more direct interest than attending fundraisers, by involving themselves in the growth and progress of specific children, inclusive of but not limited to those who have been identified as gifted and talented, as long-term benefactors who would contribute their time and money to such a program of sponsorship.

Along with sponsorship, one other recommendation would be the expansion of the multicultural component in the area of Social Studies to an inclusion of Hispanoamericano history and culture strands that would recontextualize the broad labels of Hispanic and Latino to the specific roots of identity that make up "La raza."

## APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTS

Transcript 1- February 4, 1993:

### "Banana Production, Transportation, and Marketing"

- (1) Teacher: "Bueno. La vez pasada estabamos platicando sobre el cultivo de los cacahuates. ¿No? ¿Hay alguien quien recuerde el nombre del estado de que esabamos hablando la vez pasada?"
- (2) Adult 1: "Atlanta."
- (3) Teacher: ["¿Como?"
- (4) Adult 2: "Alabama"]
- (5) Teacher: "Sí. Atlanta es la capital de un otro estado que está al lado de Alabama, que se llama Georgia."
- (6) Adult 1: ["Sí.
- (7) Child 1: "¿Georgia?"]
- (8) Teacher: "Sí. Y hay un presidente de los Estados Unidos quien nació en Georgia y también era agricultor de cacahuates. ¿Hay alguien quien recuerde su nombre?"
- (9) Adult 1: "Jeemy Carter."
- (10) Teacher: "Sí. Jimmy Carter. Así es. Entonces, como los niños les gusta los sándwiches de crema de cacahaute mucho, estabamos estudiando sobre el cacahuate...Pero también a los niños les gusta mucho una fruta que...¿alguien pueda decirme cómo se llama esta fruta que está en la página veinte?" (Everyone looks at the Spanish textbook)

- (11) Several Adults and Children: "Banana."
- (12) Teacher: "Banana. Entonces, a veces, ah, unos dicen guineos en Centroamérica o plátanos."
- (13) Adult 1: (with some hesitation) "No. Los plátanos son otros."
- (14) Teacher: "Los plátanos son otros. [En Centroamérica...]"
- (15) Adult 1: "En Centroamérica...es de la banana."]
- (16) Teacher: "Es de la banana, pero los plátanos son los que cocinan, como yo he comido plátanos fritos y también a veces se los hechan en una sopa que yo acabo de tener para mi sena hoy que se llama 'gallo en chicha.' ¿Lo conocen?" (mutual laughter among all)
- (17) Some adults respond: "Sí." (others shake their heads)
- (18) Teacher: "¿Sí?" También se cocinan los plátanos como las papas [Adult 1: "Ah hah."] y emblandan y son bien buenos. Y he tenido otros también que se sirven tostados...como se cortan en pedazitos y se comen de boquitas."
- (19) Adult 1: "Para comer así como se comen los churritos...[Teacher: "Así es."]  
Como la papita frita."
- (20) Teacher: "Sí. Como los tostaditos de maíz." (reciprical headknodding among several adults) Entonces hay muchas formas de usar lo que vamos a decir son los plátanos...¿No?"
- (21) Several adults and children: "Um hum."
- (22) Teacher: "Entonces como son parecidos los plátanos y las bananas, son como primos de la misma familia. Unas son más dulces y los otros más, ah...más blandos...¿No?"

(23) Adult 1: "Sí. En el país de nosotros les llamamos los machos."

(24) Teacher: "Los machos. Sí, hay unos grandotes que se venden en Los Angeles que son bien gruesos y negros."

(25) Adult 1: "En Los Angeles se venden. Es cierto. Y aquí los venden."

(26) Teacher: "En el Rancho Market, sí se venden. Son negros y bien maduros. Bueno vamos a estudiar en español un parte de la historia de los plátanos y después vamos a estudiarla, pero en inglés."

A guided reading with the group in Spanish follows.

(27) Teacher: "Ya hemos leído el cuento, ¿no?, en español, de los plátanos...Ya sabemos la historia de los plátanos...Entonces, vamos a estudiar la misma historia, pero en otra idioma...en inglés. Agarren el otro libro, por favor."

(28) Child 1: "In English?"

(29) Teacher: "Sí, (addressing all) pero pueden dejar el otro libro en español al lado del otro en inglés...para comparar, ¿no?...Si pueden tratar de leer conmigo...yo voy despacio...porque, primero por el idioma y después hay que ver con los conceptos también...porque ustedes (addressing adults) ya tienen los conceptos...los grandes, ¿no?, pero los niños todavía no tienen todos los conceptos...de todo del trabajo que lleva, pero vamos a ver."

I then introduce the lesson in English. (Child 3 raises both arms and waves them excitedly.)

(30) Teacher: "OK. Palabra por palabra yo voy a decir y ustedes si quieren escucharme una vez y decir, pero no digan nada hasta que



oyen y si quieren leer como una media segunda después que oyen la palabra así para que escuchan bien...OK. Ready?"

(31) Adult 4: "Yes." (echoed by a few other parents and children)

(32) Teacher: "OK. Everyone please put your finger right here on the first word of the first paragraph on page twenty."

The directed reading then begins. When the word "farmers" is read, I stop and asks for someone to identify the term in Spanish.

(33) Adult 4: "Agricultores."

(34) Teacher: "Agricultores. OK. Very Good."

The reading continues and is stopped when the word "country" is read in the context of Honduras being a foreign country which exports bananas to the United States. I ask for an identification of this term.

(35) Child 4: "Corona."

(36) Teacher: "Is Corona a country?"

(37) Child 4: (with several other children chiming in) "[Yes."

(38) Adult 4: "No, eets a ceety."

(39) Teacher: "Corona is a] city."

(40) Adult 4: (inaudible)..."a state."

(41) Child 4: "Like California."

(42) Teacher: "California is one of the states that make up the United States. En español, what's a country, somebody?"

(43) Adult 5: "Un país." (echoed by several adults, then children)

(44) Teacher: "Un país entero, que tiene muchos estados, como dicen los Estados Unidos de México o Los Estados Unidos Norteamericanos.

Entones, that is a country, OK?"

The reading then continues until the word "travel" is read in regard to how far bananas must come to reach the local markets.

(45) Teacher: "What's travel?"

(46) Several adults and children: "Viajar."

(47) Teacher: "Viajar. Uh huh. Necesitan viajar miles de millas.

Right...OK.

The reading resumes until the word "weather" is read in the context of the proper climate for growing bananas. I call for a definition.

(48) Adult 5: "Temperatura."

(49) Adult 6: "El tiempo."

(50) Teacher: "El tiempo. Sí. Uh huh. (then addressing Adult 5) La temperatura es parte de eso tambien. OK."

The reading continues. When the expression "lots of rain" is read, the teacher asks for someone to say what it means in Spanish.

(51) Adult 4: (speaking to Child 4 to encourage a response)

"Spaneesh...Lots of rain in Spaneesh."

(52) Child 4: "I don't know in Spanish."

(53) Child 1: "Mucha lluvia."

(54) Teacher: "Mucha lluvia. Very good...OK. And what does it mean...uh, lots of...lots of sunshine."

(55) Adult 4: "Lots of sunshine in Spaneesh." (Several adults attempt to help their children and the word sun is heard repeated)

(56) Child 4: "Mucho sol."

(57) Teacher: "Yeah, mucho sol. (chuckling with the class, who are obviously enjoying the brainstorming together, then referring to a picture of a worker carrying a banana bunch on the next page) Does anyone remember how we say 'harvest' in Spanish? Harvest."

(58) Adult 4: "Harvest in Spaneesh." (addressing Child 4)

(59) Adult 5: "Ahm...cosecha."

(60) Teacher: "Cosecha OK...OK."

The guided reading continues. I stop upon coming across the concept expressed in the words "are grown." Again an explanation for this term in Spanish is asked for.

(61) Adult 4: (addressing Child 4) "How do you say "are grown" in Spaneesh?"

(62) Teacher: (After no response, other than a few adults repeating the word "grown") "How do you say 'are grown?'"

(63) Adult 3: "Grown es estan cultivos."

(64) Teacher: "Estan cultivos o estan cultivados, uh huh."

The reading continues with an account of how pests such as bugs are controlled so as not to harm the crops of bananas. "Bugs" and "weeds" are then made the foci for adult language, along with child language and concept development. Both terms are requested by me to be stated in Spanish.

(65) Child 3: "Insectos."

(66) Teacher: "Insectos...and weeds?"

(67) Adult 4: "Weeds." (other adults and children repeat the word as well while several parents consult with their children and vice-

versa)

(68) Teacher: "Weeds..."

(69) Adult 5: "Silvestre."

(70) Teacher: "Silvestre, sí...[¿como?"

(71) Adult 4: (inaudible)..."molestan."]

(72) Teacher: "Sí, hierbas dañosos, ¿no?"

(73) Adult 4: "Se molestan."

(74) Adult 5: "Weeds."

Reading resumes and the adjective "heavy" is used when referring to the bunches of bananas still on their stems that are carried by workers. I request a translation into Spanish from the students again.

(75) Several adults and children: "Pesado."

(76) Teacher: "Pesado. OK."

Reading resumes. "Shoulder" is the next word that I ask to be identified in Spanish,

(77) Several adults and children: "Hombro." (a child is heard saying "Shoulder.")

(78) Teacher: "Hombro...OK"

(79) Adult 3: "Pero, hombrera porque hombro para mi es de la misma [familia]"

(80) Teacher: "Hombreras uh huh...para proteger los plátanos..." (inaudible).]

(81) Adult 3: "Ah huh."

Reading resumes. I then ask for a recontextualization of the

term "wash and weigh" in reference to the processing of the bananas.

Child 7 is called upon after raising her hand.

(82) Child 7: (inaudible, then shaking her head)

(83) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"

(84) Child 4: "Clean."

(85) Teacher: "Yeah. Clean...oh, yeah that's right, I didn't hear you (addressing child 7) (inaudible) lavan...they clean them, OK. And weigh? What is weigh?"

(86) Child 3: "Pesan."

(87) Teacher: "Pesan. OK. Muy bien. OK... good."

Reading resumes until the teacher identifies another of the vocabulary words that were introduced in the lesson.

(88) Teacher: "How do you say ripen in Spanish?"

(89) Adult 3: "Se maduran, ¿no?"

(90) Child 7: "I know."

(91) Adult 4: "Descomponer."

(92) Teacher: "Echase a perder [¿si maduran antes, no?"

(93) Adult 3: "Si maduran]"

The lesson then continues with me explaining the difference between the bridge of a ship and the a bridge that is found on land. Then the term dock becomes the next lexical item for discussion.

(94) Adult 4: "Dock." (upon hearing the word)

(95) Child 7: (jumping up) "I know!" (then quickly rolling her neck and head and sinking back down)

(96) Adult 5: "Grua."

- (97) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"
- (98) Adult 4: "Grua."
- (99) Teacher: "No. Gruas son cranes (English), esos son los cranes para levantar los contenedores."
- (100) Adult 5: "Cra..."
- (101) Adult 4: "Esos de arriba , que no..."
- (102) Teacher: "Sí, uh huh, de arriba [para levantar"
- (103) Adult 4: "Para cualquier cosa."]
- (104) Teacher: "Se puede levantar esos contenedores del tren y meterlos allí en el barco."

After the group is not able to identify the word dock in Spanish, the term the Spanish word for it, " el dique," is then given by me and the lesson continues. In studying the transportation of the bananas once they have been shipped from overseas, I ask for someone to tell me what a truck trailer is.

- (105) Adult 4: "Right heer." (pointing to Child 4, whom teacher then calls on)
- (106) Child 4: "A car...it's like a car, but a big one."
- (107) Teacher: "What do they call something that's bigger than a car?" (calling on Child 5)
- (108) Child 5: "A diesel."
- (109) Teacher: "Yeah...it runs on diesel...It's a diesel what? Somebody?..."
- (110) Child 3: "Trailer."
- (111) Teacher: "Trail...OK It's a trailer truck. In español, how do you

say it?"

(112) Adults 5 and 4, and Child 3: "Trailer." ( pronounced 'tryler')

(113) Teacher: "Trailer o camión de carga."

(114) Several adults: "Uh huh."

The reading continues with a map activity that traces the route of the long haul of the banana cargo from states beginning in the southern part of entry and going north, identifying several important cities for distribution along the way, from which the product is taken east and west.

I then indicate that what has just been discussed was the whole process of how we get bananas to California. I pause briefly then and call on parents to help their and for the children to help their parents, encouraging whoever needs help either in language or in concept development to help and be helped accordingly. Then I ask the class to help me when I need it as well. Reading resumes. I at a certain point ask for someone to define "unload."

(115) Several adults: "Descargar."

(116) Teacher: "Descargar, OK."

Reading continues and I pick the word "warehouses" from the text and ask for the equivalent term in Spanish.

(117) Adult 5: "Bodegas."

(118) Adult 4: "Bodegas."

(119) Teacher: "Sí, depositos de alimentos, bodegas digamos."

Reading resumes and the term "ripening room" is encountered. Again I check for understanding

(120) Adult 5: "Maduración."

(121) Teacher: "Maduración, cuartos de maduración. OK, they control the temperature...temperature control, all right."

Reading resumes and then I ask why these rooms need to be warm and wet.

(122) Adult 4: "That's the kind of weather the bananas need."

(123) Teacher: "That's the kind of weather that they had in...in Honduras, right?"

(124) Adult 4: "Yeah."

(125) Teacher: "Humid hot weather...except they were cold when they were in the trucks and in the boat. They kept the temperature cool so they wouldn't ripen. Now they want them to ripen."

Reading resumes until I ask for identification of the next word associated with the bananas' journey.

(126) Teacher: "Who are storekeepers?... anyone, somebody?"

(127) Adult 5 : "Comerciantes."

(128) Teacher: "Los comerciantes, uh huh. OK now, so the people from all the major distributors that buy for Stater Brother, and then Vons and Ralphs, Luckys, everybody" [...

(129) Child 4: "Food for Less?"

] "yeah all of them, Food for Less, gets their wholesale... they buy their wholesale ¿como se dice...por mayoría?"

(130) Several adults: "Mayoreo."

(131) Teacher: "Mayoreo, and then they sell it retail, ¿como se dice retail?"



(132) Several adults: "Menudeo."

(133) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"

(134) Several adults: "Menudeo."

(135) Teacher: "A nosotros, ¿no?"

(136) Adult 3: "Sí, a nosotros se venden por menudeo y ellos por mayoreo compran."

(137) Teacher: "OK".

Reading resumes and the last term that I ask to be identified is clerk.

(138) Adult 5: "Cajero."

(139) Teacher: "Cajero, the cashier...OK."

The lesson is then recapped, with a brief vocabulary review, by looking at what happens on each of the eighteen days cycle that it takes to bring the bananas from Honduras to the local retail outlet.

I then ask for the names of some of the workers who are involved in the production of bananas.

(140) Adult 3: "The farmers."

(141) Teacher: "The farmers. OK, and then what? When it's time for the harvest...there are two guys..."

(142) Adult 4: "Two guys, yeah."

(143) Teacher: "One guy does what?"

(144) Adult 5 and several other adults: "One cuts them."

(145) Teacher: "One guy cuts them, con un machete, ¿no?, and the other one?"

(146) Several adults: "Carries them...(with Adult 4 dominating now)"

carries on shoulders (with an accent) all the way to the uh..."

(147) Adult 5: "Wire cable."

(148) Teacher: "To the... he puts it on a hook on a wire cable and it just takes it goes automaticamente to the, uh processing plant...como equipos trabajando... de dos personas."

(149) Adult 4: "And then goes to [the packers]."

(150) Adult 3: "A los empacadores.]"

(151) Teacher: "And then from there it (referring to the banana bunch) goes to packing...after they clean it ... right."

(152) Adult 5: "They wash them and they dry them."

(153) Teacher: "They wash them and dry them and weigh them and then...they put them in boxes and..."

(154) Adult 3: "In con-containers."

(155) Teacher: "OK, Once they put them in the boxes what is the next thing that they have to do?"

(156) Adult 4: "They put them in containers."

(157) Teacher: "They put the boxes in containers...and where do they put the containers?"

(158) Child 8: "On a train."

(159) Teacher: "On the train. OK, and then where does the train go?"

(160) Adult 4: (addresssing Child 4) "Where does the train go?"

(161) Teacher: "Where does the train go?"

(162) Adult 5: "To the..."

I then call on Child 7 but she does not respond.

(163) Teacher: "It has to go...it has to go someplace to unload..."

Children and parents are considering the question.

(164) Adult 4: (inaudible) "land...to the seaport."

(165) Adults 3 and 4: "To the seaport."

(166) Teacher: "To the seaport. And once it gets to the seaport, they have a giant what?"

(167) Child 1: "Crane." (echoed by several children)

(168) Teacher: "The crane that puts those containers...that takes them off of the train and puts them onto the..."

(169) Child 4: "Train, uhm the...the boat."

(170) Teacher: "The boat. What's the word for a real big boat?"

(171) Several children: "Ship"

(172) Teacher: "A ship. OK, and once that they're on the boat, whose in charge of the boat?"

(173) Child 5: "The captain."

(174) Teacher: "The captain. And who who else works on the boat? Are there other people who work on the boat?"

(175) Child 5: "The sailors."

(176) Teacher: "The sailors...the workers. OK, and once they cross the ocean and go up to the United States, what happens then?"

(calling on child 8)

(177) Child 8: (inaudible)

(178) Teacher: "What?"

(179) Child 8: "They put them in the trailer."

(180) Teacher: "They take them off the ship and put them on the trailer trucks. And the the trailer trucks...what do they...where do

they go? (calling on child 3) Where do the trailer trucks go.. to different what? What do they call those different places where they trailer trucks go in the United States...and in other countries?" (no response from child 3 and teacher calls on child 1)

(181) Child1: "To cities."

(182) Teacher: "Yes, to different cities...and then from there they put them in...they put them in what?"

(183) Several adults with children echoing: "Warehouses."

(184) Teacher: "In the warehouses. And the the warehouses let the...what do they do in there?"

(185) Adult 3: "Ripening."

(186) Adult 4: "They put them in ripening rooms."

(187) Adult 5: "Ripening rooms."

(188) Adult 4: "In order to get them...ripe."

(189) Teacher: "A ripening room...and when they're ready...what happens then?"

(190) Adult 4: "The store."

(191) Adult 5: "Deliver them to the store."

(192) Teacher: "Yeah, the stores buy them, ah and then they bring them to their local stores, and then we buy them."

(193) Several adults: "We buy them."

(194) Teacher: "OK. Good".

(195) Adult 4 : "Not bad."

(196) Teacher: "That's the way it works...OK...so now we know the world is a little bigger than we think it is. Honduras is a country."

The United States is a different country. Ah what was the name of that port in Honduras, that city, does anybody remember?"

(197) Adult 4: "Cortéz."

(198) Adult 5: "Puerto Cortéz."

(199) Teacher: "Puerto Cortéz."

I then refer back to the map in the text and asks the parents to guide their childrens fingers from the little black dot that identifies the seaport in Honduras across the the ocean to the dot that represents the American port of delivery. I then point out the lines that divide the states within the continental United States, while tracing an overland route to California, and to the little dot called Los Angeles.

I then ask what is the name of the little dot where the participants live. In repeating the question I indicate that a hint is on the wall, referring to a map of Corona. I then ask for somebody to read the name.

(200) Child 4: "Corona."

(201) Teacher: "Right. OK."

I then hand out a practice sheet in Spanish titled "El racímo de platanos." The proper method for filling in the first and last names as well as the date in the Spanish form, with the day of the month written first, is modeled on the board. I explain that this practice is more directed at the children's writing skills, but that the parents may also benefit by seeing what their children are expected to do in school beyond oral language development.

Again, the focus for the adults was to assist the children in their studies. The class agrees to leave a drawing activity for homework, preferring to do writing practice during class time. The written part asked the students to name two new things that they had learned during the lesson on bananas. I ask for responses, calling on Adult 5.

(202) Adult 5: "Que vienen de bien lejos."

(203) Teacher: "Que...que vienen de bien lejos."

(204) Adult 5: "Que vienen de otro país."

(205) Teacher: "Vamos a poner ésto para...para que yo sé que muchas personas ya saben ciertas cosas, pero otras no, entonces para...para ayudar a los niños...voy a escribir ésto en el pizarrón porque es una práctica para ellos, para (inaudible) muchos de ellos no saben ésto tampoco, pero ustedes pueden ayudar a ellos para copiar lo que yo estoy escribiendo."

I then ask Adult 5 to dictate as he writes on the board: "Los platanos vienen de lejos."

(206) Teacher: (after finishing) "OK. Así está bien porque a veces los niños no saben y creen que crecen allí no más en el Food for Less." (laughter).

I then have each individual, child and adult, fill out their own paper, while working as a family team. Then I ask if a child can tell me something that he or she did not know about bananas before studying them in the lesson. I call on Child 8.

(207) Child 8: "Que viajan en trailer."

(208) Teacher: "Oh, sí...¿que vamos a poner?...los platanos..."

(209) Adult 1: "Viajan mucho."

(210) Teacher: "¿Cómo?"

(211) Adult 1: "Viajan mucho."

(212) Teacher: "Viajan mucho, pero no solamente en los trailers...en un tren, un barco, un trailer y despues otros...otros...otros camiones, entonces vemos... los plátanos viajan mucho...¿podemos poner?"

(213) Adult 4: "Yeah."

I write this modified version of child 8's response on the board. Then I circulate around the class checking that both sentences are correctly copied. I ask family teams to copy the two sentences while circulating and observing their work. I remind everyone to copy exactly what was written on the board, including capitalization of the initial letter of the first word and ending the sentences with a period, indicating that this rule applies in English as well as in Spanish.

(214) Teacher: "OK. Let's look at the paper that I just gave everybody...We're going to write the same two things we wrote here except I'm going to write them in English this time...so just look up here and watch what I'm writing ...Number one again is 'Los plátanos vienen de lejos'...'The"

(215) Adult 5: "The bananas."

(216) Teacher: "Wait. The bananas? But in English you don't say the, you don't need the article. You're just going to say..."

(217) Adult 5: "Bananas."

(218) Teacher: "Bananas come..."(writing)

- (219) Adult 5: "Bananas."
- (220) Teacher: "Bananas come..."
- (221) Adult 5: "Number one." (pointing out the place to child 5)
- (222) Adult 4: "Far away."
- (223) Teacher: "From far away (listening to adult 4) OK? And on number two, Los platanos viajan mucho. We're going to put again... Bananas..."
- (224) Adult 6: "Travel."
- (225) Teacher: "How do you say viajan?"
- (226) Adult 6: "Travel."
- (227) Teacher: "Travel...mucho."
- (228) Adult 6: "A lot."
- (229) Teacher: "A lot."

After checking the group's work, sensing that some of the younger and older students might be tiring, I then ask the class if they would like to do one more practice sheet or leave it for the next session. There is ambivalence, but a consensus decides to continue at the next session.

Transcript- February 11, 1991:

"The Banana Plant"

- (1) Teacher: "Buenas noches. Pues, como la vez pasada estabamos platicando sobre los plátanos, ¿no? vamos a dar un repaso para las personas que no estaban para entender algo del tema, ¿no?."



Entonces, abran los libros (Child 2 lifts up and shakes both arms excitedly) por favor a la página...creo que es...la página 34, como el canal."

After reviewing the previous lesson, I lead the family teams in choral reading of the Spanish text.

(2) Teacher: (referring to diagrams of the banana plant at the bottom of the page) "Allí están otra vez los diagramas. Por eso son útiles porque a veces uno no puede entender...como cuando esta leyendo una cosa, y con el dibujo puede ver bien claramente cómo es la cosa, ¿no? Por eso los diagramas son bien importantes en los estudios y también en los trabajos. Hasta el gobierno usa diagramas para sus presentaciones...de estadísticos y todo...Entonces, miren la diferencia. Éste árbol...tiene madera, ¿no? Parece un roble o un... un árbol bien grande. Éste es la diferencia entre la planta de plátanos y un árbol...porque no se puede cortar madera del tronco de la planta de plátanos ni si quiera para hacer muebles o para construir casas o nada así...pero las hojas sí. (referring to thatched roofs)...Y se puede usar por ejemplo en Centroamérica...en el estilo de tamales que se usan, ¿no?"

(3) Adult 1: "Es de hojas de pla...de banana."

(4) Teacher: "Hojas..."

(5) Child 2: "Para hacer tamales."

(6) Teacher: "Uh huh..."

(7) Child 2: "Tamales lejos." (upon his miscue, laughter by mother and several adults as well as Child 2 as his mother gently chides by

stroking and pushing his head)

(8) Adult 1: "Tamaleros." (echoed orally by several other adults who concur with this pronunciation by nodding their heads)

At this point I indicate that I am going to pass out some worksheets for a followup written activity and proceed to do so.

(9) Child 2: "¿Se llaman...?"(with one hand on forehead appearing embarrassed and the other stretched out inquiringly)

(10) Adult 1: "Sí, así se llaman, tamaleros, pero no tengas pena."  
(several other adults smile and nod encouragingly at Child 2)

The lesson continued at this point with me acting as a facilitator in evoking responses from adults and children in a written responses to questions about the lesson. Each parent and each child was given their own individual copies of the handouts to work on both individually in their thoughts and receptive language and to involve them as a dialogic team in their language expression.

Transcript- February 18, 1993:

"How Others Depend on Us"

(1) Teacher: "La vez pasada estábamos hablando...ah de como dependemos de otras...otras personas. Ahora vamos a ver como otros dependen de nosotros... Ah...el título de esta lección, es 'Otros dependen de tí.' Entonces sea niño o grande otros dependen de tí para hacer algo. Los niños tienen sus trabajos también, y sus papas dependen de ustedes igual como ustedes dependen de sus papas.

Entonces cada quien tiene algo que hacer."

"Los trabajadores de alimentación, como hemos platicado sobre los agricultores...como vimos sobre un agricultor en el estado de Alabama, un agricultor de cacahuates y tambien vimos como se producen los platános en Centroaméricica y como llevan en el tren, después en barco y después en trailers a todos partes de los Estados Unidos. Ahora (referring to book) vamos a ver lo que está pasando en este dibujo. Parece que la señora está pagando a la cajera y la niña, vamos a ver...que esta haciendo..."

(2) Adult 1: "Está pagando."

(3) Teacher: "¿Está pagando a la cajera?"

(4) Several adults: "Sí."

(5) Teacher: "Y la niña al lado de ella parece que está pensando algo, ¿no?"

(6) Adult 1: "Está pensando quizás lo que ya cobraron." (laughter among adults)

(7) Teacher: "A ver... ¡El susto!"

(8) Adult 1: (with other adults echoing in muttering tones) "¡El susto!"

(9) Teacher: "Está acostumbándose a la vida." (continued laughter)

I then begin the formal lesson, "How Others Depend on Us," by asking the parents to assist their children in reading or following along in the text. According to their literacy development, each of the children and adults then read or hear at least the expression of ideas regarding this theme.

Transcript- March 4, 1993:

"Families and Ancestors"

(1) Teacher: "Como dijimos que cada de nosotros, cada quien tiene sus antepasados, se puede ver otra vez...ah, (referring to diagram in book) hay una niña aquí sentado tocando el piano. Y ahí puede ver la historia de su familia, ¿no? La mamá está ahí arriba y ella esta dibujando ahí ¿no?...Y el papá está cocinando ¿no? Entonces cada de los padres tienen sus padres también...Bueno...y el papá del papá, tocando el piano...Como, por eso la nina le gusta tocar el piano también porque eso viene del lado del papá, el papá del papá. Entonces por eso es importantae para reconocer nuestros antepasados porque no solamente el color del pelo, o la altura y todas de las caractaristias físicas vienen de nuestras familias, pero también el carácter, las inclinaciones, y los talentos y todo eso...también vienen de las familias.

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